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National Park Service  
Cultural Landscapes Inventory  
2013



Melrose Estate  
Natchez National Historical Park

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## **Table of Contents**

Inventory Unit Summary & Site Plan

Concurrence Status

Geographic Information and Location Map

Management Information

National Register Information

Chronology & Physical History

Analysis & Evaluation of Integrity

Condition

Treatment

Bibliography & Supplemental Information

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## Inventory Unit Summary & Site Plan

### Inventory Summary

#### The Cultural Landscapes Inventory Overview:

##### CLI General Information:

##### Purpose and Goals of the CLI

The Cultural Landscapes Inventory (CLI), a comprehensive inventory of all cultural landscapes in the national park system, is one of the most ambitious initiatives of the National Park Service (NPS) Park Cultural Landscapes Program. The CLI is an evaluated inventory of all landscapes having historical significance that are listed on or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, or are otherwise managed as cultural resources through a public planning process and in which the NPS has or plans to acquire any legal interest. The CLI identifies and documents each landscape's location, size, physical development, condition, landscape characteristics, character-defining features, as well as other valuable information useful to park management. Cultural landscapes become approved CLIs when concurrence with the findings is obtained from the park superintendent and all required data fields are entered into a national database. In addition, for landscapes that are not currently listed on the National Register and/or do not have adequate documentation, concurrence is required from the State Historic Preservation Officer or the Keeper of the National Register.

The CLI, like the List of Classified Structures, assists the NPS in its efforts to fulfill the identification and management requirements associated with Section 110(a) of the National Historic Preservation Act, National Park Service Management Policies (2006), and Director's Order #28: Cultural Resource Management. Since launching the CLI nationwide, the NPS, in response to the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA), is required to report information that respond to NPS strategic plan accomplishments. Two GPRA goals are associated with the CLI: bringing certified cultural landscapes into good condition (Goal 1a7) and increasing the number of CLI records that have complete, accurate, and reliable information (Goal 1b2B).

##### Scope of the CLI

The information contained within the CLI is gathered from existing secondary sources found in park libraries and archives and at NPS regional offices and centers, as well as through on-site reconnaissance of the existing landscape. The baseline information collected provides a comprehensive look at the historical development and significance of the landscape, placing it in context of the site's overall significance. Documentation and analysis of the existing landscape identifies character-defining characteristics and features, and allows for an evaluation of the landscape's overall integrity and an assessment of the landscape's overall condition. The CLI also provides an illustrative site plan that indicates major features within the inventory unit. Unlike cultural landscape reports, the CLI does not provide management recommendations or

treatment guidelines for the cultural landscape.

**Inventory Unit Description:**

Melrose is a 78.6 acre National Historic Landmark located in the city of Natchez, Adams County, Mississippi. The site is one of three distinct units that comprise the Natchez Historical Park (NATC) that are owned and managed by the National Park Service (NPS). Melrose is considered one of the finest examples of Greek revival architecture in the American south, and is an excellent example of the suburban villas built by wealthy cotton planters in the decades before the Civil War in Natchez, Mississippi. The site contains fifteen historic buildings in addition to roads, paths, open lawns, specimen trees, ponds, former agricultural fields, and gardens. The landscape of Melrose is an early and unique example of Picturesque Landscape Design in America applied to suburban villa. Today the landscape is layered, reflecting the imprint of each of the three families and their servants who have called the estate home since its development over 150 years ago. Melrose and its historic structures and grounds are significant under criteria A and C.

The site has two periods of significance. The first spans c.1847 to 1900 and is associated with the transformation of the Southern plantation economy and society. The first owners of the property, John T. and his wife Mary Louisa McMurran built Melrose and developed the picturesque landscape during this period. The family constructed Melrose as a suburban villa, a type of estate unique to, but common in Natchez, Mississippi. Wealthy planter families popularized suburban villas in the decades prior to the Civil War. The villas combined the convenience of an in town location with the beauty and serenity of a country estate. This first period of significance reflects not only the establishment of the estate by a wealthy planter family and its subsequent sale to another planter family, The Davis-Kellys, but also the continuity of African-Americans who transitioned from slavery to freedom while living on and caring for the estate.

The second period, between 1901 and 1975, associates Melrose with the American Historic Preservation Movement of the early twentieth century. George Malin Davis Kelly and his wife, Ethel Kelly decided to take up permanent residence at Melrose in 1901. The arrival of the Kelly family signaled a break with former ways of life at Melrose and marked the beginning of a period characterized by a focus on the preservation of the estate. The Kellys made a conscious decision to preserve the antebellum buildings and landscape, rehabilitating both with a stated desire to “restore” their antebellum appearance. The Kellys repaired and retained the Main House and its full complement of original outbuildings. They also attempted to restore the grounds to their antebellum appearance based on previous conditions as recalled by Jane Johnson and Alice Sims, two African American women and former slaves of the Davis family, who had lived on and cared for Melrose in the decades following the Civil War. The Kellys choice to rehabilitate the buildings, the interior, and the landscape based on their understanding of the original conditions represents an enlightened early example of American preservation.

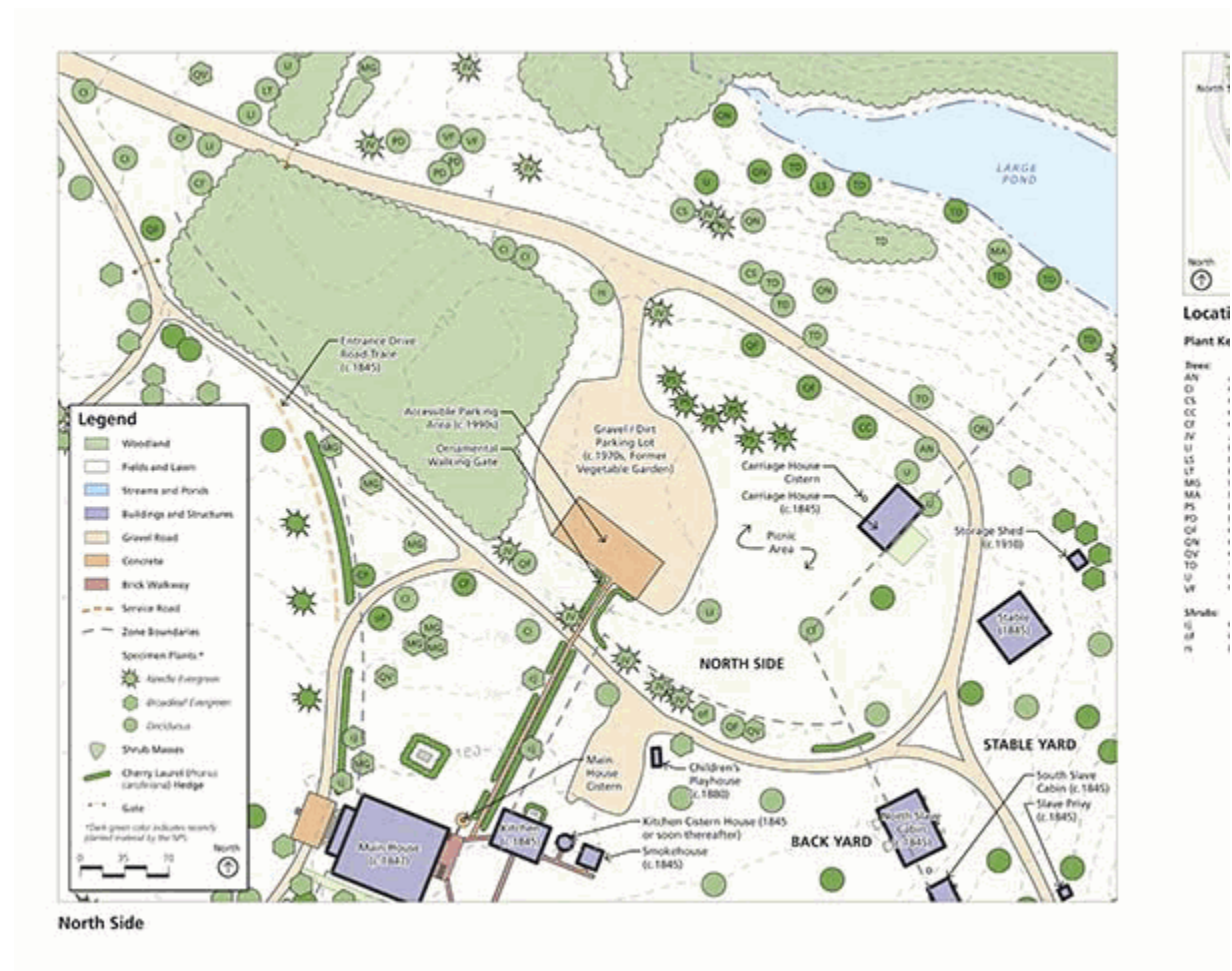
In addition to significance under criteria A, Melrose is significant under criterion C, in the area of architecture, as a highly successful attempt at perfecting the Natchez mansion and suburban villa. In the area of landscape architecture, Melrose is significant as an early example of Picturesque Landscape Design in America.



Melrose retains all seven aspects of integrity: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The estate retains its historic location, setting, and association with both the transformation of the southern plantation economy and society and the American historic preservation movement, evoking the historic scene through its original buildings, existing landscape patterns, mature vegetation, and picturesque views across the property. The majority of the buildings and structures reflect the design, materials, and workmanship of the antebellum period, while preserving the repairs and minor alterations completed by the subsequent owners of the estate. These include the Main House (c.1847), rear courtyard with Kitchen (c.1845), Dairy (c.1845), Cistern Houses (c.1845), Smokehouse (c.1845), and Main House Privy (c.1845) as well as two Slave Houses (c.1845), a Slave Privy (c.1845), Carriage House (c.1845), and Stable (c.1845). A small Servant's Barn (c.1845) also dates to the antebellum period. One twentieth century outbuilding, a Storage Shed (c.1910) is located behind the Stable. This building reflects the design, materials and workmanship of the early 1900s. The site layout and overall picturesque character of the landscape vegetation were established in the 1840s-1850s and preserved by the Kellys during the twentieth century. When John and Betty Callon owned the estate in the 1970s-1980s, alterations to the site occurred including the removal of fences and hedges that defined the historic spatial organization of the property and the addition of flowering plants throughout the grounds. Since acquiring the property in 1990, the NPS has removed many of the insensitive landscape additions installed by the Callons and restored several important landscape features the Callons removed, including the majority of the hedges that defined the inner zone of the property during both historic periods. Despite these changes, many of the defining features remain, thereby preserving the site's ability to convey its significance. All surviving elements of the picturesque design of the landscape retain integrity, including the serpentine entrance drive, ornamental cypress pond, and the specimen trees in the Front Lawn that filter the planned views of the Main House and across the Front Field. The vegetation today is a combination of layers from each period of development at Melrose and conveys the site's historic feeling of an early American Picturesque landscape design and suburban villa built in the mid-nineteenth century and preserved in the early twentieth century.

The condition of the landscape today is fair. Melrose retains most of its historic spatial organization including a formal Flower Garden, remnant Orchard, and ornamental Front Lawn, however, many of the spaces historically devoted to work lack definition and evidence of their historic land use. Impacts on the cultural landscape that affect the historic character include invasive vegetation species, lack of fences that historically separated the inner ornamental grounds from the outer working landscape, and aging specimen trees and shrubs.

## Site Plan



*North Side*

Melrose Estate  
Natchez National Historical Park

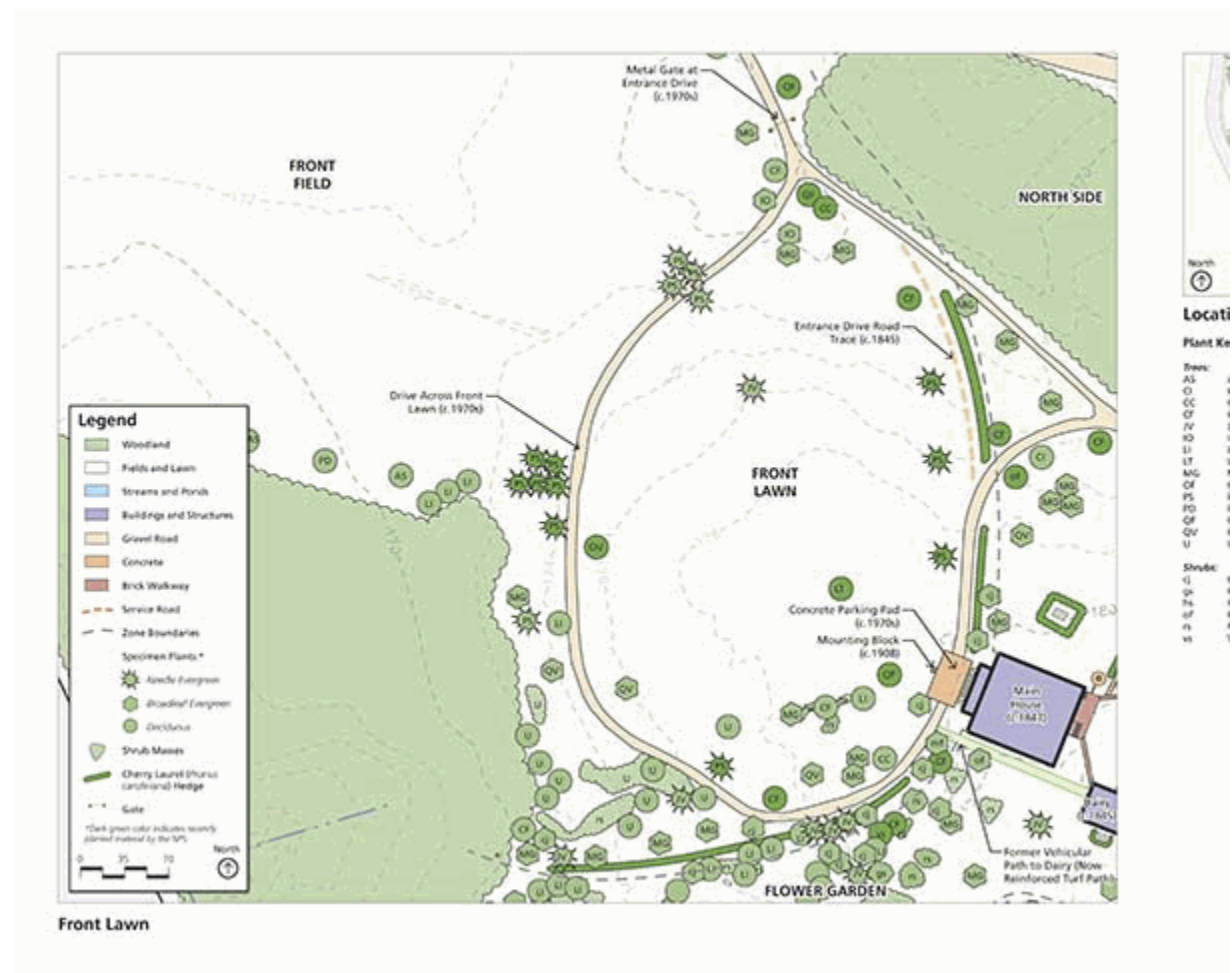


*Entire Property*



Inner Zone Areas Map

*Inner Zone*



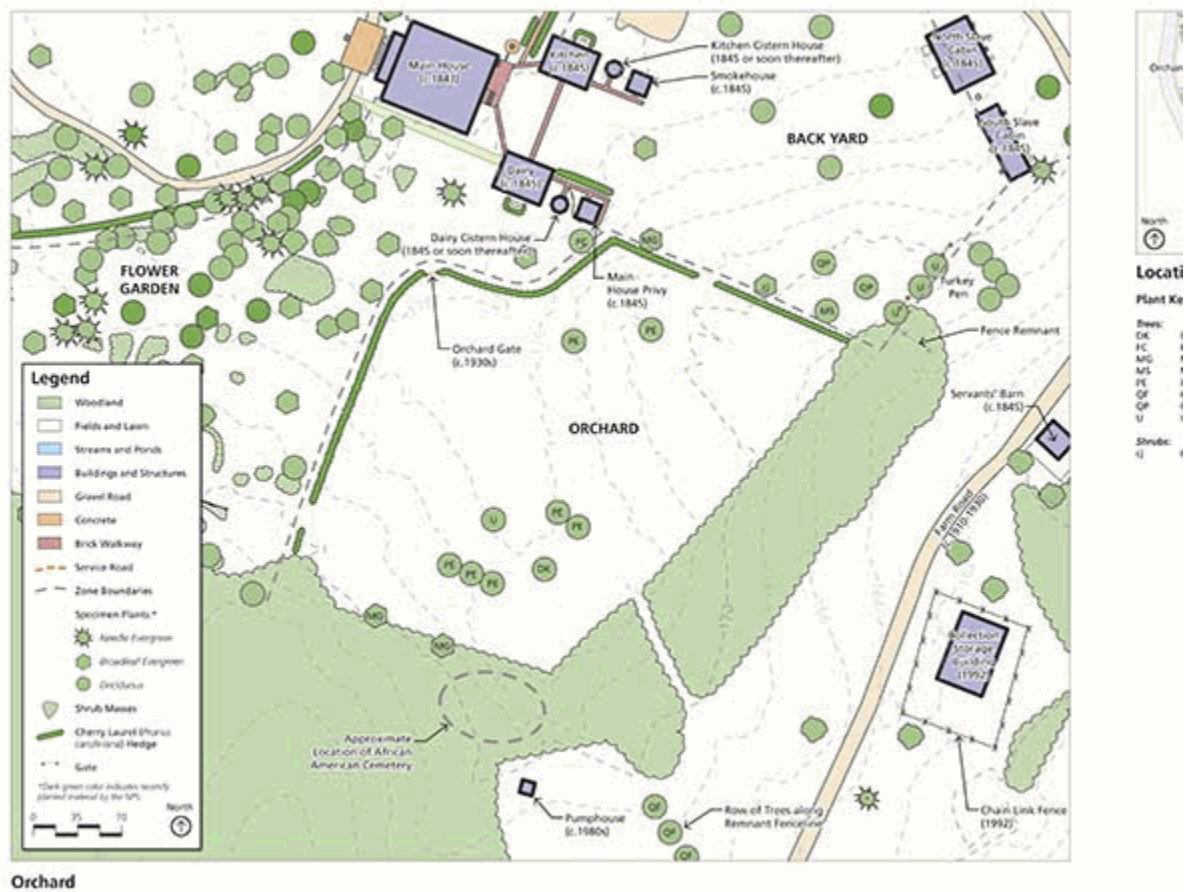
Front Lawn



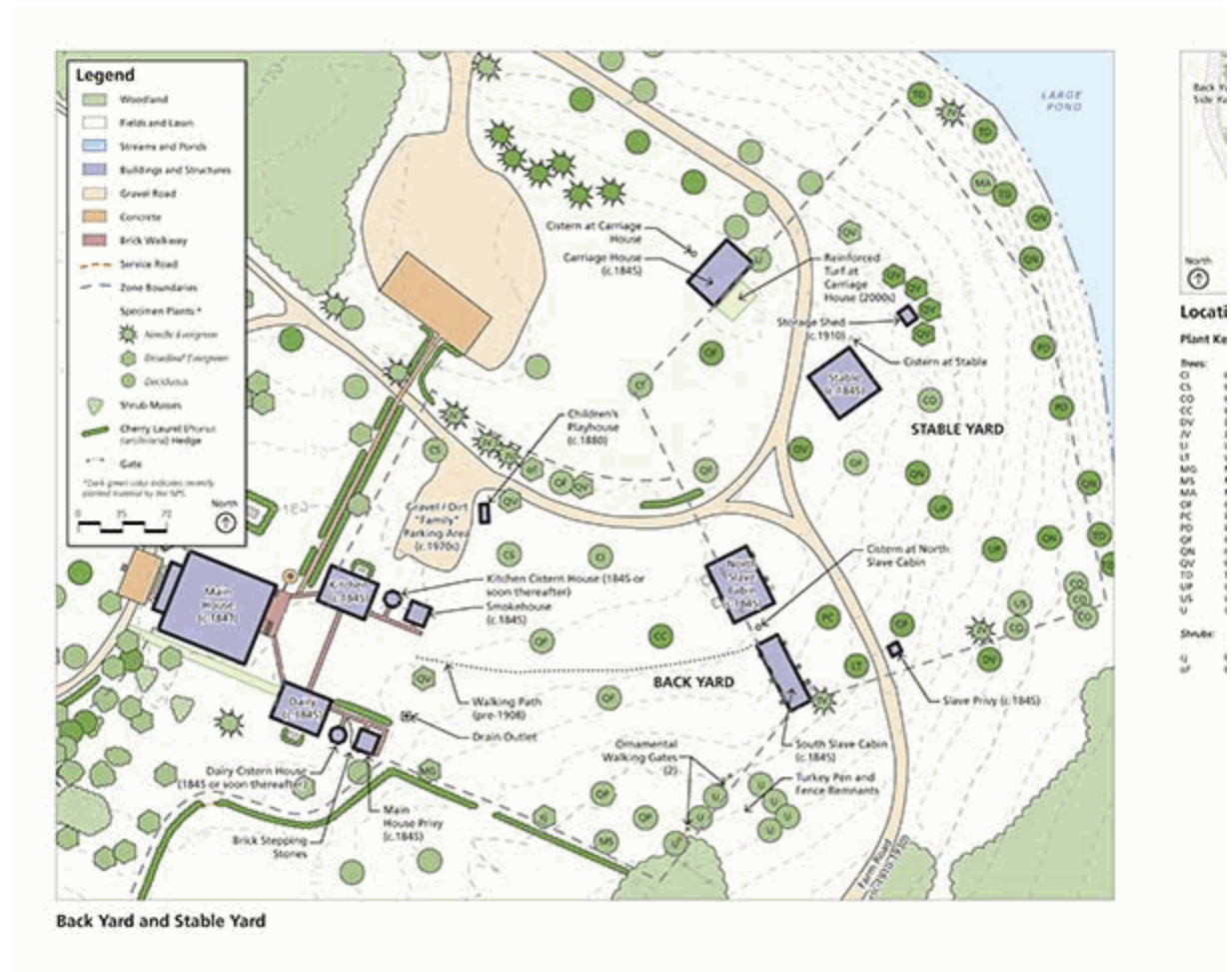


*Flower Garden*

Melrose Estate  
Natchez National Historical Park



*Orchard*



Back Yard Stable Yard

## Property Level and CLI Numbers

<b>Inventory Unit Name:</b>	Melrose Estate
<b>Property Level:</b>	Landscape
<b>CLI Identification Number:</b>	550175
<b>Parent Landscape:</b>	550175

## Park Information

<b>Park Name and Alpha Code:</b>	Natchez National Historical Park -NATC
<b>Park Organization Code:</b>	5565
<b>Park Administrative Unit:</b>	Natchez National Historical Park

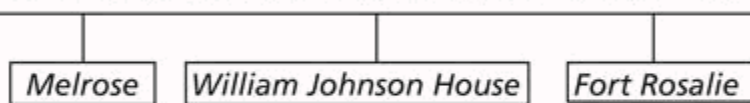


### CLI Hierarchy Description

Natchez National Historical Park (NATC) has three identified cultural landscapes: Melrose, William Johnson House, and Fort Rosalie. Melrose is separate culturally and historically from the other inventory units in the Park and is therefore determined to be a unique landscape. The CLI process identified no component landscapes for the Melrose estate.

## NATCHEZ NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

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 *Landscape*

## Concurrence Status

**Inventory Status:** Complete

**Completion Status Explanatory Narrative:**

The CLI for Melrose Estate was completed through an IDIQ contract with The Jaeger Company.

**Concurrence Status:**

**Park Superintendent Concurrence:** Yes

**Park Superintendent Date of Concurrence:** 09/27/2013

**National Register Concurrence:** Eligible -- SHPO Consensus Determination

**Date of Concurrence Determination:** 09/12/2013

**National Register Concurrence Narrative:**

Signed by Greg Williamson.

**Concurrence Graphic Information:**



IN REPLY REFER TO:

## United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
Southeast Regional Office  
Atlanta Federal Center  
1924 Building  
100 Alabama St., S.W.  
Atlanta, Georgia 30303



H22(SERO-CRD)

5 September 2013

### Memorandum

To: Superintendent, Natchez National Historic Park

From: Chief, Cultural Resources Division, Southeast Region 

Subject: Melrose Estate Cultural Landscapes Inventory

We are pleased to transmit to you the Cultural Landscape Inventory (CLI) for the Melrose Estate. The CLI is an evaluated list of landscape properties in the National Park System eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NR) or that contribute to a previously-listed NR historic property. The Jaeger Company completed this CLI through an IDIQ contract with the Southeast Regional Office. All park and regional office edits have been incorporated into this final version. A copy of it can be located at:

<http://share.inside.nps.gov/sites/SER/CRD/landscapes/Shared%20Documents/Forms/AllItems.aspx>

In order for the CLI to be certified, the Mississippi State Historic Preservation Office needs to concur on the findings of the CLI. Melrose Estate was first listed in the National Register in 1974 as part of a National Historic Landmark designation, with additional documentation in 1996 as part of a Historic Resource Study completed by Ann Beha Associates, Inc. The CLI recommends updating the existing nomination to reflect the cultural landscape and all of the contributing buildings, structures, and landscape features contained therein; and expanded to match the current NPS property boundaries. David Hasty, CLI Coordinator for the Southeast Region, will send a request to the Mississippi State Historic Preservation Division for concurrence on the CLI findings.

Approval by the park superintendent is also needed for certification. If the findings of the CLI are agreed upon, please sign the attached approval form and return it to our office to the attention of David Hasty by fax (404.562.3202), e-mail ([david\\_hasty@nps.gov](mailto:david_hasty@nps.gov)) or mail.

Attachment



*Memo to Superintendent.*

MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT of ARCHIVES AND HISTORY



PO Box 571, Jackson, MS 39205-0571  
601-576-6850 • Fax 601-576-6975  
mdah.state.ms.us  
H.T. Holmes, Director

September 12, 2013

Mr. Dan Scheit  
Mr. David Hasty  
National Park Service, SE Regional Office  
Atlanta Federal Center, 1924 Building  
100 Alabama St., SW  
Atlanta, GA 30303

RE: Cultural Landscape Inventory for the Melrose Estate at Natchez National Historic Park, Determination of Eligibility, MDAH Project Log #08-166-13, Adams County

Dear Sirs:

We have reviewed your Cultural Landscape Inventory and supporting documentation for the above referenced resources, received August 26, 2013, pursuant to our responsibilities under the National Historic Preservation Act and 36 CFR Part 800. After reviewing the information provided, we concur with the inventory contributing features and your determination of eligibility for the Melrose Estate as a cultural landscape. I have signed and am enclosing the concurrence provided.

Please let me know if there is anything else you may need.

Sincerely,

Greg Williamson  
Review and Compliance Officer

FOR: H.T. Holmes  
State Historic Preservation Officer

*Letter to SHPO.*



## United States Department of the Interior



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
Southeast Regional Office  
Atlanta Federal Center  
1924 Building  
100 Alabama St., SW.  
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

IN REPLY REFER TO:  
H22 (SERO-CRD)

20 August 2013

Bill Gatlin  
Mississippi Department of Archives and History  
Historic Preservation Division  
P. O. Box 571  
Jackson, Mississippi 39205-0571

Dear Mr. Gatlin:

Enclosed please find a copy of the Cultural Landscape Inventory (CLI) for the Melrose Estate at Natchez National Historical Park in Natchez, Mississippi. The CLI is an evaluated list of landscape properties in the National Park System considered eligible for the National Register of Historic Places or that contribute to an existing historic property. In order for CLI data to become certified, National Park Service regulations require concurrence from the SHPO on the eligibility of these properties. We are requesting your review of the Melrose Estate CLI and ask that you return the concurrence form.

Melrose Estate was first listed in the National Register in 1974 as part of a National Historic Landmark designation, with additional documentation in 1996 as part of a Historic Resource Study completed by Ann Beha Associates, Inc. The CLI recommends updating the existing nomination to reflect the cultural landscape and all of the contributing buildings, structures, and landscape features contained therein; and expanded to match the current NPS property boundaries. A full discussion of this recommendation can be found on pages 9-16 in the National Register section of the inventory.

With concurrence from your office, the findings become certified in the CLI database. Your concurrence also gives us justification to submit proper additional NR documentation at a future date. If you have any questions about these documents, please contact David Hasty, CLI Coordinator, Southeast Region (SER), at (404) 507-5780 or by e-mail at david\_hasty@nps.gov. The concurrence form can be returned by fax at (404) 562-3202, e-mail attachment, or mailed to the address above.

We greatly appreciate your office's assistance with the project.

Sincerely,

*Acting HCH*  
Dan Scheidt  
Chief, Cultural Resource Division  
Southeast Region

Enclosure



*Signature from SHPO*



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
Southeast Regional Office  
Atlanta Federal Center  
1924 Building  
100 Alabama St., S.W.  
Atlanta, Georgia 30303




H22(SERO-CRD)

5 September 2013

Memorandum

To: Superintendent, Natchez National Historic Park

From: Chief, Cultural Resources Division, Southeast Region 

Subject: Melrose Estate Cultural Landscapes Inventory

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Approval by the park superintendent is also needed for certification. If the findings of the CLI are agreed upon, please sign the attached approval form and return it to our office to the attention of David Hasty by fax (404.562.3202), e-mail ([david\\_hasty@nps.gov](mailto:david_hasty@nps.gov)) or mail.

Attachment



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*Memo to Superintendent*

**CULTURAL LANDSCAPE INVENTORY  
CONCURRENCE SHEET – 5 September 2013**

**Park Information**

**Park:** Natchez National Historical Park

**Name:** Melrose Estate

**Location:** Natchez, MS

**County:** Adams

**CLI#:** 550175

**Cultural Landscape Condition Information**

**Landscape Condition:**

**Good** \_\_\_\_\_

**Fair**   X  

**Poor** \_\_\_\_\_

**Management Category:**

**Must be preserved**   X  

**Should be preserved** \_\_\_\_\_

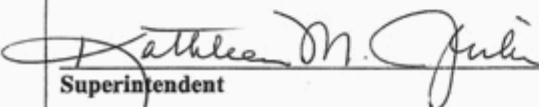
**May be preserved** \_\_\_\_\_

**May be released, altered or destroyed** \_\_\_\_\_

**Park Superintendent Concurrence**

**Concur**   ✓  

**Do Not Concur** \_\_\_\_\_

  
**Superintendent**

9/27/2013  
**Date**



*Signature from Superintendent.*

## Geographic Information & Location Map

### Inventory Unit Boundary Description:

The inventory unit includes the entirety of NPS owned property at Melrose, a 78.6-acre tract located southeast of downtown Natchez, Mississippi. The current site boundary contains a majority of the original acreage of the historic estate. The western and eastern property boundaries consist of Melrose-Montebello Parkway and a waterway called Spanish Bayou, respectively. A residential subdivision known as Roselawn borders the property to the north, and the Illinois Central Gulf Railroad makes up the southern boundary. The legal parcel number for Melrose is 0071 0001 0001.

### State and County:

**State:** MS

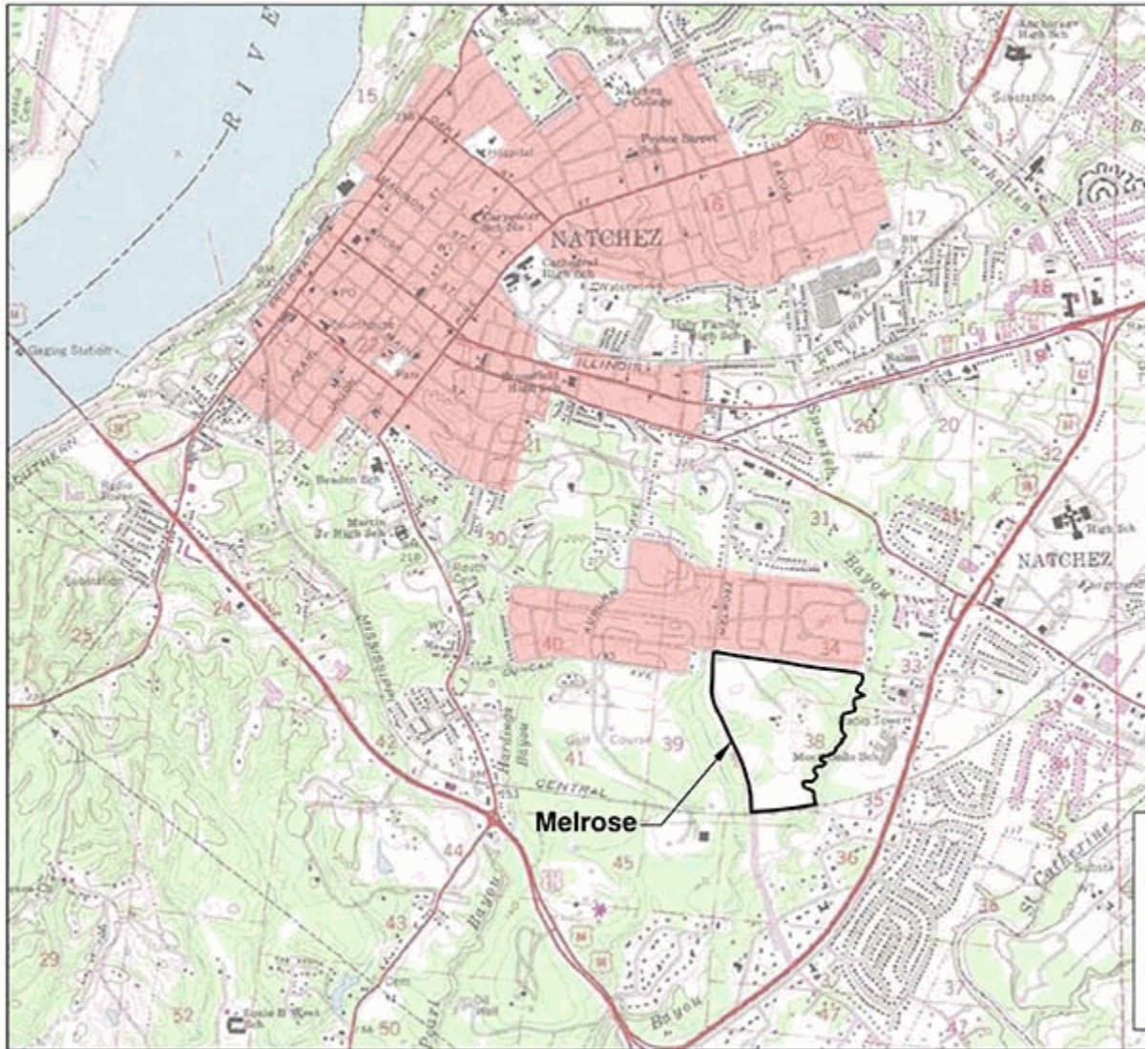
**County:** Adams County

**Size (Acres):** 78.60

**Boundary UTMS:**

<b>Type of Point:</b>	Area
<b>Datum:</b>	NAD 27
<b>UTM Zone:</b>	15
<b>UTM Easting:</b>	653,222
<b>UTM Northing:</b>	3,491,073
<b>Type of Point:</b>	Area
<b>Datum:</b>	NAD 27
<b>UTM Zone:</b>	15
<b>UTM Easting:</b>	653,709
<b>UTM Northing:</b>	3,490,376
<b>Type of Point:</b>	Area
<b>Datum:</b>	NAD 27
<b>UTM Zone:</b>	15
<b>UTM Easting:</b>	653,412
<b>UTM Northing:</b>	3,490,350
<b>Type of Point:</b>	Area
<b>Datum:</b>	NAD 27
<b>UTM Zone:</b>	15
<b>UTM Easting:</b>	653,934
<b>UTM Northing:</b>	3,490,948

**Location Map:**



*Location Map*

**Regional Context:**

**Type of Context:** Cultural

**Description:**

For most of its history, Melrose was a residential estate. John McMurran originally built Melrose as a suburban villa on the outskirts of Natchez, Mississippi. Previous owners used the land for cotton production. Suburban villas are characteristic of antebellum Natchez, where wealthy planters and businessmen constructed rural retreats close to the comforts of town. George Malin Davis Kelly and his wife Ethel Kelly wanted to preserve Melrose and began returning the estate to its antebellum appearance in 1901. They based the rehabilitation of the landscape on the remembrances of Alice Sims and Jane Johnson, two former slaves who continued to live on, and take care of the estate until their deaths in the mid-twentieth century. Beginning in the 1930s, Ethel Kelly opened Melrose to the public as part of the Natchez Pilgrimage, an annual tour of historic homes in the area. In the 1980s, John and Betty Callon opened Melrose year round and offered overnight accommodations to paying customers. The National Park Service now administers the estate and provides guided tours of the house. The grounds are open daily.

**Type of Context:** Physiographic

**Description:**

Melrose is located in the physiographic region known as Loess Hills. A type of soil called Loess overlies the bedrock from Vicksburg south to Natchez and into Louisiana along the Mississippi River at depths that vary from fifty to two hundred feet. This unique soil forms the bluff at Natchez and the gently rolling hills southeast of the city where Melrose is located. Loess is windswept sand and clay deposited during the last ice age and has many unique attributes. Loess soils have a high rate of fertility, making it desirable for agricultural uses. However, once vegetative cover has been removed, it is highly susceptible to erosion and easily forms deep ravines and gullies that often have near vertical walls. This type of erosion is visible along the nearby Natchez Trace, where U-shaped gullies form “sunken roads”.

Most of Melrose drains towards Spanish Bayou, a waterway located on the eastern property boundary. The land rises sharply from this stream for approximately twenty feet before leveling off into a gently sloping plain. The Main House occupies the highest point on the property and the lowest point occurs in the southeast corner of the site, where the Spanish Bayou flows beneath a piped railroad culvert.

**Type of Context:** Political

**Description:**

Melrose is part of the city of Natchez, Mississippi and is located in Adams County. Melrose lies within Mississippi’s 3rd Congressional District.

**Management Unit:** NATC  
**Tract Numbers:** 101-01  
**GIS File Name:** NATC\_NGS\_Mosaic.sid

**GIS File Description:**

## Management Information

### General Management Information

**Management Category:** Must be Preserved and Maintained

**Management Category Date:** 05/30/1974

**Management Category Explanatory Narrative:**

Please note, this management category is entered for GPRA purposes as instructed by National PMDS Goal Coordinator.

**NPS Legal Interest:**

**Type of Interest:** Fee Simple

**Public Access:**

**Type of Access:** With Permission

**Explanatory Narrative:**

Melrose is open from 8:30 am to 5:30 pm, except for Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Years Day. The NPS offers guided tours of the house on the hour, with the last tour beginning at 4:00 pm.

### Adjacent Lands Information

**Do Adjacent Lands Contribute?** Yes

**Adjacent Lands Description:**

The current western boundary of Melrose consists of Melrose-Montebello Parkway and its associated right-of-way. This right-of-way land was part of the Melrose estate until Mrs. Kelly sold it to the City of Natchez in 1972 for road construction. The privately owned right-of-way on the western side of the parkway is currently undeveloped and comprised of forest. The edge of this forest corresponds to the historic tree line associated with the far edge of the Front Lawn and Front Field of Melrose. The view from the Main House to the western edge of the property remains relatively unchanged from the historic period due to the contribution of these privately owned adjacent lands. Vegetative buffer on NPS property screens two non-contributing adjacent residential neighborhoods along the northern property line, Roselawn Homes and Roselawn Terrace. McLaurin Elementary school occupies the land beyond the Spanish Bayou, which forms the historic and current eastern boundary of Melrose. Woodland buffer screens this non-contributing property from views within Melrose. A railroad embankment forms the south boundary of the property.





The front lawn of Melrose. Looking northwest from the edge of the lawn in front of the Main House. c. 1905.



The front lawn of Melrose. Looking northwest from the edge of the lawn in front of the Main House. 2011.

## **National Register Information**



## **Existing National Register Status**

### **National Register Landscape Documentation:**

Entered Inadequately Documented

### **National Register Explanatory Narrative:**

The Melrose nomination to the National Register was prepared in conjunction with its designation as a National Historic Landmark as the result of a 1973 thematic study of nineteenth-century American architecture undertaken by the NPS. The NPS added Melrose to the National Register and designated the site a National Historic Landmark on May 30, 1974. According to the criteria in use at the time of its designation, Melrose possesses national significance during the nineteenth century in the area of architecture. The nomination classifies Melrose within the building category. The National Register nomination is brief and does not adequately inventory the buildings or landscape, nor does it define a period of significance beyond the general 'nineteenth century'. The nomination focuses almost exclusively on the Main House and does not include the entire property, leaving out significant features historically associated with the estate including outbuildings and landscape features.

Ana Beha Associates, Inc. completed an update to the Melrose National Register nomination for the NPS in 1996 as part of a Historic Resource Study for the entirety of Natchez National Historical Park. The draft nomination recommended revisions to the National Register documentation to define the property as a district, including the Main House and fourteen dependent buildings or structures, and to recognize a second period of significance, extending from 1866 to 1946 in the area of historic preservation. Despite the acknowledgement of the significance of the cultural landscape to the property, detailed descriptions of landscape resources are not included in the draft nomination. The draft accounts for the historic landscape features as one contributing "site", rather than addressing individual resources in detail or discussing how the cultural landscape contributes to the feeling and setting of Melrose. In addition, over 15 years have passed since the completion of the update, making portions of the nomination out of date. Since that time, the NPS removed many non-contributing contemporary features from the property listed in the draft update and restored contributing landscape features, including several cherry laurel (*Prunus caroliniana*) hedges and multiple specimen tree plantings. The NPS made these changes carefully following treatment recommendations outlined in a 1996 Cultural Landscape Report (CLR) for the property.

Ian Firth and Ana Beha Associates Inc., working for the NPS completed the CLR for Melrose in 1996. In the document, Firth advocates for additional consideration of the Melrose landscape under Criterion 'C', arguing that the primary significance of Melrose's landscape is as an early regional example of American Picturesque Landscape Design applied to a suburban villa. Firth also notes that the Melrose Landscape may also be considered significant under criterion 'A' because of its association with the antebellum southern cotton culture, and the American Historic Preservation Movement of the early twentieth century.

In 2009-2010 History Branch staff from the Southeast Region of the NPS reviewed both the existing and draft National Register documentation for Melrose and provided a draft Determination of Eligibility (DOE). History Branch staff disagreed with key parts of the 1996 draft nomination and commented:

Branch staff believe that, in addition to addressing the South's planter aristocracy, a National Register nomination should give consideration to African Americans who transitioned from slavery to freedom while living at Melrose. Restructuring the historic context to include the narrative of African Americans at Melrose necessitates a revision of the proposed periods of significance. The periods of significance must reflect the continuity of African Americans' lives at Melrose—uninterrupted by changing ownership. In order to do so, the period of significance should span from the construction of Melrose in c. 1847 until George and Ethel Moore Kelly took possession of the house in 1901. The arrival of the Kelly family signaled a break with former ways of life and the beginning of a period characterized by a focus on the preservation of Melrose. Ethel Moore Kelly's efforts to preserve Melrose constitute a second period of significance. The dates of the historic preservation period should coincide with the beginning of Ethel Moore Kelly's work to preserve Melrose (1901) and end with the cessation of preservation activities (tentatively dated to 1975 to correspond with the death of Ethel Moore Kelly, but may change with further research).

The CLI recommends updating the existing nomination to reflect the cultural landscape and all of the contributing buildings, structures, and landscape features contained therein; and expanded to match the current NPS property boundaries. The new nomination should include and expand on the wealth of information related to the buildings and structures at Melrose contained in the 1996 draft nomination. The new update should incorporate significant landscape features such as the carefully designed views across the property, the unique spatial organization of the estate based on Euclidean geometry, the ornamental cypress pond, and the cherry laurel hedges that subdivide the inner zone of the property. An update should also mention contributing circulation features like the entrance drive. Contributing vegetation, including the courtyard live oak, the camellias in the front lawn, the pine tree groupings in the Front Field, the crape myrtles along the entrance drive, and the historic magnolias located in the yards surrounding the Main House also deserve discussion, along with the numerous contributing small-scale features identified in the CLI. An updated nomination should consider and document how the cultural landscape of Melrose contributes to the seven qualities that define integrity according to National Register Criteria: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The CLI also recommends that the updated nomination acknowledge the alterations to the estate that have occurred during the NPS management of the property and incorporate the changes to the period significance proposed by the Regional Office History Branch staff in their 2009-2010 draft Determination of Eligibility. A new nomination must also revisit and include the information related to criterion A and C provided by Firth in the 1996 CLR for the property.

**Existing NRIS Information:**

<b>Name in National Register:</b>	Natchez National Historical Park
<b>NRIS Number:</b>	01000276

## National Register Eligibility

**National Register Concurrence:** Eligible -- SHPO Consensus Determination

**Contributing/Individual:** Individual

**Significance Level:** National

**Significance Criteria:** A - Associated with events significant to broad patterns of our history

**Significance Criteria:** C - Embodies distinctive construction, work of master, or high artistic values

### Period of Significance:

**Time Period:** CE 1847 - 1900

**Historic Context Theme:** Creating Social Institutions and Movements

**Subtheme:** Other Creating Social Institutions and Movements

**Facet:** Other Creating Social Institutions and Movements

**Other Facet:** Ways in Life, Antebellum Southern Cotton Culture and the transformation of plantation economy and society

**Time Period:** CE 1847 - 1900

**Historic Context Theme:** Expressing Cultural Values

**Subtheme:** Architecture

**Facet:** Greek Revival (1820-1840)

**Time Period:** CE 1901 - 1975

**Historic Context Theme:** Expressing Cultural Values

**Subtheme:** Landscape Architecture

**Facet:** The Revival Of Classicism

**Other Facet:** American Picturesque Landscape Design

### Area of Significance:

**Area of Significance Category:** Architecture

**Area of Significance Category:** Landscape Architecture

### Statement of Significance:

Melrose is eligible for National Historic Landmark status both for its associations with important events in the history of the United States and its architectural significance. Melrose is nationally significant under National Register of Historic Places Criterion A, for its association with the transformation of the Southern plantation economy and society, and the American Historic Preservation Movement of the early twentieth century. The site is also significant under Criterion C, in the area of architecture, as an intact example of an antebellum suburban estate that includes a Greek revival Main House and a complete complement of outbuildings. These buildings retain an outstanding degree of integrity, with additional significance gained from a large collection of mid-nineteenth century furnishings contained within them. The landscape of Melrose achieves additional significance under Criterion C, in the area of landscape architecture, as an early example of American Picturesque Landscape Design applied to a suburban villa in Natchez, Mississippi.

#### CRITERION A

Melrose is eligible for its association with the transformation of a Southern plantation economy and society. Two prominent planter families owned the property from 1847 until 1900 and African Americans both enslaved and freed sustained and preserved the estate during that time.

At the time of its construction in 1847, Melrose exemplified the profligate lifestyle of the Southern planter aristocracy in antebellum Natchez, Mississippi. John T. and Mary Louisa McMurran built the suburban villa on the outskirts of Natchez, Mississippi, the cultural capital of the antebellum American South and in the years leading up to the war, one of the wealthiest cities in America. The remaining nineteenth century furnishings of Melrose combined with family correspondence document the family's extravagant lifestyle in detail.

The Civil War disrupted the plantation economy that supported the lavish lifestyles on display at suburban villas like Melrose. Tragedy struck the McMurran family in the years surrounding the war, changing their lives forever. Their son, John Jr., enlisted and went to Pensacola, Florida. In 1864, their daughter, Mary Elizabeth McMurran Conner died at Melrose of an undiagnosed illness. Her daughter, Mary Louisa Conner died the same year on another nearby family property, known as Woodlands, after her physician (who refused to take the oath of allegiance) was denied permission to cross federal lines near Melrose. Another family member, John McMurran Conner died at Melrose the next year of camp dysentery. By December of 1865, the family sold Melrose and most of its furnishings to Elizabeth Davis and George Malin Davis and moved to Woodlands. In 1866, John T. McMurran died tragically in a steamboat accident. His wife Mary lived at Woodlands until her passing in 1891 (CLR 1996: 83). Like many of her peers in the planter elite, estate debts incurred after the war forced Mary Louisa McMurran to liquidate investments in railroads, stocks, and securities. The collapse of the southern credit market, combined with the loss of the enslaved labor force, created considerable impediments to the planter way of life for the McMurran family and the remaining planters after the war.

Elizabeth and George Malin Davis, also members of the Natchez planter elite, survived the war and in the decade following it they flourished, increasing their property holdings in the area. In addition to purchasing Melrose, the Davis family owned a second suburban villa, Concord, as well as two

townhouses in Natchez, Choctaw and Cherokee. Davis's success after the war was atypical of the planter class in Natchez. Less than one-quarter of the planters in Adams County retained their land holdings after the war. The Davis family resided at Choctaw during this period, occasionally using Melrose as a residence. Julia Davis Kelly, the daughter of George and Elizabeth Davis, inherited the estate in 1877. Six years later in 1883, Julia's only son, George Malin Davis Kelly inherited the family estate upon the death of his mother and grandfather. The vast estate included the Natchez mansions Melrose, Choctaw, Cherokee, and Concord, as well as several plantations in Louisiana. George Malin Davis was a young boy at the time of the inheritance. He resided in New York with his father Dr. Stephen Kelly during this period, visiting Melrose infrequently.

The monumental changes to Southern plantation society brought on by the Civil War affected all members of the community, not just the planter aristocracy. Though Melrose was never a working plantation, the white planter families who financed and resided on the estate owed their financial success and opulent lifestyle to the enslaved work force who worked their agricultural lands, maintained their magnificent mansions, and saw to their daily needs. The McMurrans owned 17 slaves when they moved to Melrose in 1848. By 1861, they owned twenty-five. Family correspondence provides descriptions of Melrose slaves and their household activities, and indicates that the family probably treated their slaves with kindness in a paternalistic manner. The family made no deprecating references to their slaves in the correspondence, distinguishing McMurrans family correspondence from the correspondence of many of their peers in Natchez. Family correspondence also indicates that very few, if any, female slaves owned by the McMurrans deserted the family after the Union army arrived in 1863, though the letters provide little insight into how their relationship with the family evolved or how they exercised their newfound freedom after the war (HRS 1996: 92-94). Today, three types of slave housing exist at Melrose, as well as the dependencies, Main House, and agricultural fields where they labored.

When the Davis family purchased Melrose in 1865, at least one former slave may have arrived at the estate with them. Jane Johnson, the former property of Elizabeth Davis, moved to Melrose a free woman. Jane Johnson and another woman, Alice Sims, were among a number of recently freed African Americans who continued to work for their former masters after obtaining their freedom. Both Jane Johnson and Alice Sims remained at Melrose in service of the Davis-Kelly family their entire lives, not only working for their former masters, but also for their former masters' descendants. According to family tradition, these two women resisted attempts by local residents to remove decorative arts from Melrose during the Davis-Kelly family's long absence from the property between 1865 and 1900. Jane Johnson and Alice Sims probably used some areas of the property for their own purposes during this period. Jane Johnson sold vegetables, eggs, and butter in Natchez later in her life and it seems likely that her gardening and farming enterprises began during this period, while she was a caretaker of Melrose (CLR 1996: 87). The Davis-Kelly family likely rented the outer fields to local farmers through an agent, though no records of these transactions have been uncovered.

Melrose is also eligible in the area of Historic Preservation during the period of 1901 until 1975. The Kelly family owned the property during this time. With the help of two former Davis family slaves who had lived on and cared for Melrose since the end of the Civil War, George Malin Davis Kelly

and his wife Ethel Kelly preserved Melrose, restoring the house and grounds to a romanticized version of their antebellum appearance. The arrival of the Kelly family signaled a break with former ways of life and marked the beginning of a period characterized by a focus on the preservation of the estate.

In 1901, George Malin Davis Kelly and his new wife, Ethel Moore visited Melrose and decided to restore the estate that George had inherited years earlier. Alice Sims and Jane Johnson, two former Davis family slaves and caretakers of Melrose, had prepared Melrose for their arrival and the estate impressed the young family. The Kellys decided to do something unheard of at the time, making a conscious decision to restore the house and retain all of the original furnishings, which by then were sixty years old and unfashionable. They repaired and retained the Main House and all of the original outbuildings. They also attempted to restore the grounds to their antebellum appearance based on previous conditions as recalled by Jane Johnson and Alice Sims. Surviving family members indicate that Jane Johnson was the driving force behind the operation of Melrose and its restoration by Ethel Kelly. Family history establishes that Jane Johnson was especially influential in the restoration of the antebellum landscape.

It is important to acknowledge that while the Kellys intention was to ‘restore’ Melrose to its antebellum appearance, the preservation efforts the family carried out have more in common with rehabilitation as defined by Secretary of the Interior Standards, as the Kellys certainly made changes to the property to meet their personal needs and tastes.

The fact that the Kellys came to Melrose in 1901 and made the conscious decision to make plans for it to be their primary residence by rehabilitating the buildings, the interior, and the landscape based on their understanding of the original conditions represents an enlightened and early example of American preservation (CLR 1996: 151). For this reason, Melrose also has an additional period of significance that recognizes the efforts of George Malin Davis Kelly, Ethel Kelly, Jane Johnson, and Alice Sims to preserve and rehabilitate the McMurran landscape at Melrose.

In addition to preserving Melrose, the Kellys were influential members of the historic preservation community in Natchez. Ethel Kelly was one of the founding members of the Natchez Garden Club in 1929, which established the Natchez Pilgrimage three years later in 1932. The Natchez Pilgrimage is one of the earliest organized house and garden tours in the United States, and is an early example of heritage tourism in America. Melrose was one of 22 antebellum homes in Natchez that opened to visitors during the Pilgrimage, an event that soon became the driving force behind the local tourism economy. The Kelly family opened Melrose to the public as part of this seminal event, each year from 1932 until 1974, when Ethel Kelly’s failing health forced the closure of her home to tourists (HRS 1996: Appendix 8.4).

The Natchez Garden Club took the proceeds from the first Pilgrimages and purchased a neglected historic house on Ellicott Hill in Natchez, restoring the home in 1935-1936. The group’s acquisition and subsequent restoration of the house marked the first time a private organization had restored a building in Mississippi, a significant event in the state’s preservation history. The club also saved and preserved the William Johnson House, a nationally significant property in downtown Natchez, now owned by the

NPS. Another preservation organization, the Historic Natchez Foundation, established the Ethel Moore and George Malin Davis Kelly Restoration Award to recognize outstanding achievements in restoration in the community, honoring the considerable contributions the Kellys made to the preservation movement in Natchez during their lifetimes (HRS 1996: Appendix 8.4).

Although additional research is necessary to clarify the level of significance that Melrose and its residents, both African American and white, relate to historic preservation movement in the American South, it is clear that Melrose occupies an important place in the history of early historic preservation in the United States. The estate's association with the Natchez Pilgrimage combined with the history of the rehabilitation of the house and grounds based on the remembrances of former slaves who transitioned from slavery to freedom on the property, create a unique and unusual example of historic preservation in America.

#### CRITERION C

The 1974 National Historic Landmark nomination established the architecture at Melrose as nationally significant under criterion C, in the area of architecture, as a highly successful attempt at perfecting the Natchez mansion and suburban villa.

Melrose is most notable for its completeness. Built c. 1847, its ownership has been in only three families and the home still features many of its original furnishings. The Greek revival style Main House, rear courtyard with Kitchen, Dairy, Cistern Houses, Smokehouse, and Privy remain intact along with two Slave Houses, a Slave Privy, Carriage House, Stable and Servant's Barn. The combination of high style architecture, documentation of the homes designer and builder, a local named Jacob Byers, and the fact that all of the original dependency buildings remain complete makes Melrose one of the most architecturally significant nineteenth century sites in America.

The landscape of Melrose is also eligible under criterion C, in the area of landscape architecture, as a rare and early example of American Picturesque Landscape Design.

Based upon the developmental history of Melrose, the historical significance of the landscape is as a distinctive example of American Picturesque landscape design skillfully executed at a Mississippi suburban villa in the 1840s and subsequently rehabilitated in the early nineteenth century by a family interested in the preservation of the antebellum estate. The 1996 Melrose CLR elucidates the intellectual and stylistic foundations of the picturesque movement imported to nineteenth-century America from England. Andrew Jackson Downing's *Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening as Adapted to North America* was the seminal work of design theory during this period and popularized picturesque landscape aesthetics in America. The composition of Melrose expresses the picturesque aesthetic with its arrangement of lawn, trees, ponds, curvilinear drives, winding paths, flower gardens, kitchen gardens, and orchards. Melrose furthermore reflects the traditional organization of an antebellum suburban villa in Natchez by combining formal pleasure grounds with elements of a working landscape. The overall organization of Melrose into inner and outer zones is characteristic of vernacular site planning of antebellum plantation landscapes, in that there was

an inner residential and an outer agricultural zone of decidedly different designs. The inner zone contains the ornamental and formal features of the site while the outer zone contains work-related spaces and buildings, including fields, stables, and slave quarters.

While Downing does not mention mathematical devices for developing scale and proportions of the landscape designs he promotes, he does emphasize the coordinated effect of the landscape, the architecture, and the interior. The layout of Melrose is ingenious in the way the designer attempts to ensure unity and coordination by extending the scale and proportions of the architecture into the landscape (CLR 1996: 150). At Melrose, the designer accomplishes this in the layout of the rear courtyard, the dimensions of which are identical to the footprint of the Main House. While the entire landscape of Melrose was picturesque and informal in the English style, the inner zone was ordered by Euclidean geometry based on the architecture of the main house, while the outer zone responded more freely to natural systems and topography. A circle with the main house at its center and a radius of 475 feet, encompassed most of the ornamental grounds, the Orchard, Vegetable Garden, and Back Yard that together comprised the inner zone. The circle appears to have provided the designer an organizing device as it passed through or close to a series of key points in the site layout. The radius of 475 feet is also based on the dimensions of the main house, which, without its rear gallery or porch fits within a circle having a 47.5-foot radius. The cherry laurel hedges that subdivide the inner zone of the property extend the geometry of the house into the landscape aligning with the corners of the main house and the dependencies that surround the rear courtyard (CLR 1996: 90).

The McMurran family initially installed the picturesque landscape in the 1840s and 1850s. Family correspondence and visitors' descriptions convey the character of the landscape during the antebellum period. The diarist T. K. Wharton, for example, wrote in 1859 that the McMurran estate was an "ample mansion...flanked by grand forest trees stretching away on either side, and half embracing a vast lawn in front of emerald green... the place is English all over."

A series of panoramic photographs and surveys from 1903-1908, commissioned by the Kellys, document with detail the character of the mature picturesque landscape, a half-century after its installation. These documents provide the best documentation of the antebellum landscape at Melrose that the Kellys were trying to recreate. Picturesque features such as the winding entrance drive, the ornamental cypress pond, the groups of pine trees flanking the front entrance to the Main House, and the expansive Front Lawn exist at Melrose today, lending integrity to both the antebellum period and the Kelly periods of significance. The character of the existing vegetation is in keeping with picturesque ideals, consisting of a park like assemblage of mature shade trees and ornamental shrubs sprinkled throughout the property. An agricultural feature known as a level spreader persists in the topography of the front field conveying the bucolic character of the outer agricultural fields of Melrose, which remain intact minus some woodland encroachment.

The two periods of significance span the continuous use of the landscape from the mid-nineteenth century until the death of Ethel Kelly in 1975. While the main house, its associated outbuildings, and the landscape accurately convey the significance of both historic periods, the cultural landscape of Melrose today best reflects the early twentieth century rehabilitation of the estate undertaken by the Kelly



family under the direction of Jane Johnson and Alice Sims, two former Davis family slaves who cared for, lived, and worked at Melrose for almost their entire lives. The estate's intact nineteenth century architecture and its continuity of use as a suburban estate throughout the historic period until the 1970s, makes Melrose the best-preserved example of a suburban villa in Natchez, Mississippi.

## Chronology & Physical History

### Cultural Landscape Type and Use

**Cultural Landscape Type:** Designed

**Current and Historic Use/Function:**

**Primary Historic Function:** Estate Landscape

**Primary Current Use:** Exhibit

**Current and Historic Names:**

**Name**

Melrose

**Type of Name**

Both Current And Historic

**Ethnographic Study Conducted:**

No Survey Conducted

**Chronology:**

Year	Event	Annotation
CE 1841	Land Transfer	December 16, 1841, John McMurran purchased 132 acres for \$5,000 from Henry Turner, Jr., on which he later built Melrose.
CE 1843 - 1850	Built	Jacob Byers served as architect and builder of Melrose for John McMurran. The antebellum buildings include the Main House, Kitchen, Dairy, two Cisterns, Smokehouse, Main House Privy, two Slave Cabins, Stable/Barn, Servant's Barn and Carriage House.
1843 BCE - CE 1850	Built	The McMurrans installed the majority of the English-style picturesque landscape during this period.

CE 1843 - 1850	Built	Slave Privy built. The exact date of construction is unknown. The HSR provides conflicting information relating to this building's date of construction- suggesting it was built prior to 1848 early on in the document (p.32)and then stating it was built after 1850 in later chapters (p.56, p.131). According to Park staff, archeological investigations conducted into the vault under the structure found no artifacts that predated the last quarter of the nineteenth century. It is possible that the building was moved to its current location in the late nineteenth century. Architectural details of the privy speak to congruence with the construction of other buildings at the estate with no indication of a later construction date.
CE 1865 - 1850	Land Transfer	On December 8, 1865, John McMurran sold Melrose to Elizabeth Davis, wife of Natchez attorney, George Malin Davis.
CE 1866 - 1901	Neglected	Elizabeth Davis' daughter, Julia Davis Kelly and her husband Dr. Stephen Kelly use Melrose as an occasional residence during this period.
	Preserved	Both Jane Johnson and another freed woman, Alice Sims, were among a number of newly freed African Americans who, for a variety of reasons, chose to remain in the service of their erstwhile masters at Melrose and, following the Kellys' extended removal to New York, to lease and work the land. While a local agent managed the estate, family tradition holds that Johnson and Sims preserved the mansion and its furnishings from local attempts to dismantle the household. (Draft DOE Sect 8:15)
CE 1880	Built	Julia Davis Kelly built the Playhouse at Melrose in the late 1870s, or early 1880s, for her only son George Malin Davis Kelly.
CE 1883	Land Transfer	Julia Davis Kelly died in Natchez of tuberculosis in 1883. Upon her death and the death of her father the same year, George Malin Davis Kelly, son of Stephen and Julia Kelly, inherited the family estate, including Melrose, from grandparents George and Elizabeth Davis. George Malin Davis Kelly was only seven years old at the time. Dr. Stephen Kelly took George to New York after Julia's death, leaving Melrose in the care of two former Davis family slaves, Jane Johnson and Alice Sims.

CE 1901 - 1975	Rehabilitated	George Malin Davis Kelly and his wife Ethel Kelly began rehabilitating Melrose in 1901. Their goal was to “restore” the house and grounds to their antebellum appearance. They based the rehabilitation of the landscape on the remembrances of Alice Sims and Jane Johnson, two former Davis slaves who continued to live on, and take care of the estate into the mid-twentieth century. Around 1905, George took panoramic photographs of Melrose, documenting the condition of the landscape at that time. According to the CLR, after the Kellys completed their rehabilitation of Melrose at the beginning of the twentieth century, they made few further changes to the property. (CLR 1996: 107)
	Built	The Kellys fenced the entire property line. (CLR 1996: 109)
	Planted	The Kellys planted wild azaleas ( <i>Rhododendron canescens</i> ) and irises at the cypress pond trying to enhance the pond while retaining its naturalistic appearance. (CLR 1996: 123)
	Established	The Kellys established a small dairy farm at Melrose. (CLR 1996: 109)
	Altered	The Kellys converted the ground floor of the Dairy into a garage for their automobile. They buried 55-gallon drums adjacent to the garage to hold gasoline for the vehicle. Lines ran from these tanks through the concrete floor of the Dairy to a pump located inside the building. (CLR 1996: 109)
	Altered	The Kellys added new farm buildings in and around the Stable Yard, and converted the Stable into a cow barn. (CLR 1996: 110)
	Abandoned	The Kellys abandoned the pond north of the Vegetable Garden. (CLR 1996: 123)
	Built	The Kellys created a new, much larger pond on the Roselawn (north) side of the Main House prior to 1920. (CLR 1996: 123)
	Abandoned	The Kellys abandoned the large pond they created after the dam failed in the 1950s.

Abandoned	A short link between the gravel side road to the Stable Yard entrance drive became disused and grown over with grass. In the nineteenth century, after people had been deposited at the front door, carriages were driven to the Carriage House via this link. In the age of the automobile, this link was no longer needed (CLR 1996: 110)
Altered	The Kellys added a short road to the garage in the Dairy from the entrance drive prior to 1908. (CLR 1996:110)
Altered	The Kellys created a circuit road that gave the people who rented land from the Kellys access to their rented fields without having to trespass within the inner zone of the property. Sections of this route were likely used in the nineteenth century, but the Kellys added sections to create a more segregated system of circulation between the inner and outer zones of the property. (CLR 1996:110)
Built	The Kellys continued to use what was probably a nineteenth century design for their large entrance gates: white palings with a sag curve along the top. They developed a variant of this for the small “walking” gates, which were framed in a wooden arch. The Kellys used these gates to mark the extent of the inner zone of the property along pedestrian routes. Farm gates were used in the outer zone of the property that consisted of horizontal iron bar gates hung between cedar posts. (CLR: 110)
Planted	The Kellys carried out an extensive program of replanting in the ornamental grounds. They followed the nineteenth century layout as much as possible, but plant selection was a reflection of the Kellys. According to the CLR, the garden should be seen first as Ethel Kelly’s garden and secondarily as a rehabilitation of the McMurren-Davis garden. (CLR 1996: 111)
Restored	The Kellys replanted overgrown cherry laurel hedges lining the front entrance drive, closely following the original lines. (CLR 1996: 111)
Planted	The Kellys added nandinas ( <i>Nandina domestica</i> ) beside the front steps of the Main House as foundation plantings. (CLR 1996:111)

Retained	The Kellys retained two stands of pine trees that framed the view from the Main House across the Front Lawn.
Planted	The Kellys added large groupings of azaleas beside the entrance drive and its terminal loop and along the fence beside the front field between the two stands of pines, altering views and spatial relationships within the Front Lawn. (CLR 1996: 111-112)
Built	The Kellys added a tennis court to the Flower Garden. (CLR 1996: 112).
Altered	Ethel Kelly replaced deteriorated boxwood borders with jonquil bulbs in the Flower Garden. According to Jane Johnson and Alice Sims, all of the paths in the Flower Garden were lined with boxwoods during the McMurran-Davis period. (CLR 1996: 112)
Restored	Ethel Kelly restored the parterre wall in the Flower Garden in the 1940s as a surprise for her husband George. (CLR 1996: 112)
Planted	The Kellys planted wild azaleas ( <i>Rhododendron canescens</i> ) along a fence line located beyond the parterre in the Flower Garden. (CLR 1996: 112)
Restored	The Kellys restored the cherry laurel allée leading from the Kitchen to the Vegetable Garden. (CLR 1996: 114)
Planted	The Orchard was planted with a mixture of fruit and flowering trees spaced 15-20 feet apart in rows. Species included apple, pear, fig, wild plum and tung-oil trees. (CLR 1996: 116)
Moved	The Kellys introduced a wrought iron gate from the grounds of Cherokee - another house they owned in Natchez - to the Orchard at Melrose. (CLR 1996: 116)
Built	The Kellys built a fence around the Orchard, inside the cherry laurel hedge, to contain cattle that grazed the Orchard. (CLR 1996: 116)

Retained	The Kellys continued use of the Vegetable Garden, growing sweet corn, field peas, sweet potatoes, Irish potatoes, carrots, beans, turnips, artichokes and a number of peppers. (CLR 1996:117)
Planted	Ethel Kelly planted a water oak ( <i>Quercus nigra</i> ) in the center of the Courtyard and a live oak ( <i>Quercus virginiana</i> ) at the eastern end, to shade the area. (CLR 1996:117)
Planted	The Kellys retained the line of cherry laurels beside the path to the Privy, and planted a crape myrtle with a bed of irises and lilies in front of it. (CLR 1996: 118)
Planted	The Kellys planted vines and encouraged them to grow on the dependencies. A white jasmine, ( <i>Jessamine officinale</i> ) grew up the column on the porch of the Dairy nearest the Main House. The Kellys trained wisteria on a trellis at the northeast corner of the Kitchen and creeping figs ( <i>Ficus pumila</i> ) covered the walls of the Privy and Smokehouse. (CLR 1996: 118)
Altered	The Kellys enjoyed hunting and maintained extensive dog pens in the backyard, between the Courtyard and the Slave Cabins. The Kellys removed these pens by 1950, when their interest in hunting waned. (CLR 1996: 118)
Altered	The Kellys made the Turkey Pen in the backyard smaller. (CLR 1996: 119)
Maintained	The Kellys continued the traditional of animal husbandry at the estate, keeping chickens, cows, calves, horses, a mule, geese, ducks, turkeys, swans and guinea hens. (CLR 1996: 119)
Altered	The enclosure behind the Turkey Pen was used for livestock. Referred to as, "Aunt Alice's Barnyard" this is where Alice Sims and Jane Johnson kept their animals, separated from the animals owned by the Kellys. The small barn, was known as the "Servant's Stable". Jane Johnson kept her horses there. (CLR 1996: 118-119)
Maintained	The Kellys generally maintained the historic pattern of fields on the property, replacing fences as needed. (CLR 1996: 120)

	Removed	The historic view from the Main House from inside the main gate was closed by the growth of trees to the south of the Cypress Pond. (CLR 1996: 124)
	Altered	The historic view from the portico of the House across the lawn into the Front Field was interrupted by shrubs planted along the fence line. (CLR 1996: 124)
CE 1908	Platted	The surveying firm of John W. Babbit mapped the estate in 1908. The property comprised 115 acres at the time, four acres less than the 119 acres sold by the McMurrans to Elizabeth Davis in 1865. The migration of the streams defining the property boundaries may account for the discrepancy.
CE 1910	Inhabited	The Kellys became full-time residents of Melrose.
CE 1913	Altered	The Natchez and Eastern Railroad negotiated a right-of-way across the southern half of the estate in 1913. The route divided the property into two sections and the construction of the railroad altered the topography in that area.
CE 1920	Altered	Electricity brought to Melrose for the filming of a movie called, "Heart of Maryland"
CE 1941	Altered	Roselawn subdivision was built along the northern property line, altering surrounding land use and views from within the estate.
CE 1950	Removed	The Kellys logged portions of the property's woods, removing timber. (CLR 1996: 12)
CE 1950 - 1959	Planned	In the 1950s, the City of Natchez developed a master plan that proposed extending Melrose Road, which dead-ended at the Melrose front gate, with a new parkway that would follow the west and south property line of Melrose.
CE 1972	Land Transfer	The City of Natchez acquired right-of-way from Ethel Kelly for the construction of the Melrose-Montebello Parkway, a new road planned to follow the western property line of Melrose. A portion of the historic property was lost, altering the extent of the estate.

CE 1974	Built	The City of Natchez completed construction of the Melrose-Montebello parkway in 1974. The building of the parkway separated Melrose from the bayou and woods, which formed its original western boundary. The new roadway now formed the western property boundary and opened up that side of the estate to vehicular traffic and the sights and sounds that go along with it. Because of this shift in boundaries, the entrance to Melrose was redesigned and the pattern of fields and woods were reorganized. (CLR 1996: 127)
CE 1976	Land Transfer	One year after the death of Ethel Kelly in 1975, John and Betty Callon purchased Melrose and the remaining 85 acres of the historic estate from the heirs of Ethel Kelly, her three grandchildren.
CE 1976 - 1990	Inhabited	The Callons made renovations to the buildings, opening the house to paying visitors and using the buildings for entertaining and lodging guests. The Callons hired architect William D. Morrison from Jackson, MS, but relied extensively on Dix Fowler, a Natchez contractor to oversee the work. Landscape Architect Bill Garbo, produced a landscape plan that was not fully implemented. The Callons' intent was to preserve the historic character of Melrose while renovating the house and grounds to accommodate their way of life. (CLR 1996: 126)
	Removed	The Callons took down the large water oak Ethel Kelly planted in the center of the Courtyard. It was in poor condition at the time.
	Removed	The Callons discontinued farming at the site and removed all of the fences, resulting in a lack of distinction between the inner and outer zones of the property. (CLR 1966: 128)
	Removed	The Callons removed all of the cherry laurel hedges from the property, replacing only a short stretch beside the orchard. As a result, the historic compartmentalization of the inner zone grounds almost disappeared. (CLR 1996: 128)
	Retained	The Callons retained all the buildings dating from the nineteenth century in their original locations, except for the Playhouse. (CLR 1996: 128)



Moved	The Callons moved the Playhouse from the north side of the Kitchen to the south side of the Dairy. (CLR 1996: 128)
Removed	The Callons removed all farm buildings added by the Kellys, except for a small storage shed located behind the Stable. (CLR 1996: 128)
Built	The Callons built a small wood and fiberglass panel greenhouse in the field to the east of the Orchard. They also built two pump houses. (CLR 1996: 128)
Built	The Callons rebuilt the large pond created and then abandoned by the Kellys after their dam failed. The new pond was larger and had straighter sides. (CLR 1996: 133)
Built	The Callons built a gazebo made of recycled cypress timber as a focal point in the center of the rebuilt large pond. (CLR 1996: 133)
Built	The Callons built a large gravel parking lot in the former location of the Vegetable Garden. (CLR 1996: 129)
Retained	The City of Natchez moved the main gates to the property when constructing the Melrose-Montebello Parkway. The Callons repaired and retained these gates in their new position near the cypress pond. (CLR 1996: 129)
Abandoned	The Callons abandoned and grassed over a portion of the entrance road to the main house along the north side of the front lawn. (CLR 1996: 129)
Built	The Callons constructed a new road, which made a large loop around the Front Lawn, to provide guest access to the front portico of the Main House on formal occasions. They also planted groups of azaleas and drifts of bulbs alongside this new road, reinforcing the Kelly period plantings already located there. (CLR 1996: 129-130)
Abandoned	The Callons closed the garage in the Dairy and removed the road leading to it on the south side of the Main House. (CLR 1996: 129)
Built	The Callons built a gravel family parking lot north of the Smokehouse. (CLR 1996: 129)

Built	The Callons built a new road through the fields on the Montebello side of the property. It started in what had been the stable yard and finished in the southwestern corner of the fields where the railroad met the Parkway. This road used short stretches of the old farm roads from the Kelly era, but much of it followed a new, more direct line. (CLR 1996: 129)
Built	The Callons built a concrete pad in front of the Main House steps to use as a drop off point for visitors. They repositioned the historic mounting block after construction. (CLR 1996: 130)
Planted	The Callons planted azaleas beside the portico in place of the nandinas used by the Kellys as foundation plantings in that location. They also planted roses and azaleas on the south side of the Main House where the road to the garage in the Dairy had been. (CLR 1996:130)
Restored	The Callons restored the brick parterre in the Flower Garden a third time. (CLR 1996: 130)
Removed	The view from the brick parterre in the Flower Garden to the south did not exist during the Callon period. (CLR 1996: 130)
Planted	The Callons planted white azaleas beside the parterre steps and filled the quadripartite beds with bulbs and annuals inside a frame of boxwoods. Plant selection followed a planting plan designed by William Garbo. (CLR 1996: 130)
Abandoned	The Callons abandoned the network of paths that linked the parterre to the rest of the Flower Garden. They maintained the ground plane of the Flower Garden as one continuous lawn. (CLR 1996: 130)
Retained	The Callons retained camellias and azaleas that Ethel Kelly had planted on the western side of the cherry laurel allée leading from the Vegetable Garden to the Courtyard (CLR 1996: 130-131)

Planted	The Callons planted roses on eastern side of the cherry laurel allée leading from the Vegetable Garden to the Courtyard. They also added azaleas on the north side of the Kitchen. (CLR 1996: 130)
Removed	The Callons removed a large red oak ( <i>Quercus rubra</i> ) located to the north of the Kitchen. (CLR 1996: 130)
Built	The Callons built new brick paths on either side of the northern cistern house to lead from the family parking lot to the courtyard. They established a large rose bed between these two paths. (CLR 1996: 131)
Removed	The Callons removed the cherry laurel hedges at the perimeter of the Orchard. (CLR 1996: 131)
Planted	The Callons planted a hedge of sasanquas ( <i>Camellia sasanqua</i> ) to replace the cherry laurel hedge that divided the Flower Garden from the Orchard. They planted a line of azaleas to replace the cherry laurel hedge that separated the Orchard from the Back Yard. The Callons added cherry, Japanese persimmon ( <i>Diospyros kaki</i> ), pear trees, and blueberry bushes ( <i>Vaccinium ashei</i> ) to the Orchard. (CLR 1996: 131)
Removed	The Callons removed the path across the Courtyard linking the Kitchen to the Dairy. (CLR 1996: 131-132)
Altered	The Callons removed the boxwood hedge beside the back porch of the Main House and replaced it with azaleas. (CLR 1996: 132)
Planted	The Callons planted azaleas in front of the porch columns of the Kitchen and Dairy. (CLR 1996: 132)
Planted	The Callons planted a Japanese yew hedge beside the smokehouse to screen air conditioning units. (CLR 1996: 132)
Removed	The Callons removed the cherry laurel hedge lining the walk to the Privy. They also removed the creeping fig vines from the sides of the Privy and Smokehouse. (CLR 1996: 132)
Altered	The Callons renovated the former Slave Cabins to provide additional accommodations for guests. (CLR 1996: 132)

	Planted	The Callons added foundation plantings to the former Slave Cabins, consisting primarily of azaleas. (CLR 1996: 132)
	Planted	The Callons planted a few pecan trees in the Stable Yard and along the side road leading to it. (CLR 1996: 132)
	Retained	The Callons retained the walking gates built by the Kellys. (CLR 1996: 132)
	Altered	The yards east of the Stable Yard and Back Yard virtually disappeared during the Callon period. The upper part of the larger yard visually became part of the Stable Yard and trees invaded the lower portion. Trees also invaded the Turkey Pen, which became part of a new belt of woods along the eastern side of the Back Yard and Orchard. (CLR 1996: 133) 1977
CE 1977	Preserved	The Callons provided the Mississippi Department of Archives and History with a 30-year historic preservation easement protecting 40 acres centered around the Main House.
	Moved	The Callons moved the entrance gate originally located along the entrance drive to the Main House that marked the division between the inner and outer zones of the property during the Kelly period. The gate was relocated to the northern farm road that served as the preferred vehicular route during the Callon period.
CE 1980 - 1989	Land Transfer	The Callons sold the land south of the railroad to International Paper Realty Corporation, making the railroad line the property's southern boundary and reducing the total site acreage to 78.68 acres. (CLR 1996: 128)
CE 1990	Land Transfer	The NPS acquired Melrose from the Callons in 1990.
CE 1990 - 2013	Preserved	The NPS preserves and maintains Melrose.
	Built	The NPS built a collections storage building surrounded by a security fence in the field to the east of the Orchard and south of the Servant's Barn in 1992. (CLR 1996: 135)

Maintained	The NPS built a large maintenance compound in the southwest corner of the property in 1995. This complex added a secondary vehicular access point to the property along Melrose-Montebello Parkway. (CLR 1996: 135)
Altered	The NPS stopped the Callon period practice of pumping water into the large pond in order to retain a consistent water level. As a result, the water level in the large pond fluctuates. (CLR 1996: 135)
Retained	The NPS retained the large pond, built by the Callons.
Abandoned	The NPS abandoned the two pump houses built by the Callons. Both have fallen into disrepair.
Planted	The NPS planted many young trees throughout the property. Most of these occur around the large pond and on the northern side of entrance road leading to the former Vegetable Garden/current parking area.
Retained	The NPS retained a contemporary chain link fence along the northern property line.
Built	The NPS added a chain link fence along the southern property line adjacent to the railroad. NPS built an ornamental wooden gate at the entrance to the maintenance compound that is similar in style to the ornamental gate at the main entrance to the property.
Restored	The NPS moved the Melrose Playhouse back to its approximate original location.
Restored	The NPS restored the view from the Main House across the Front Lawn to the Front Field.
Restored	The NPS planted a group of pine trees in the front yard that frame the view from the Main House to the Front Field, in approximate historic locations.
Removed	The NPS removed many of the Callon and Kelly period azalea plantings in the Front Lawn and Front Field.

Restored	The NPS planted a group of pine trees along the northern edge of the vegetable garden. A similar group of the same tree species was located here historically.
Restored	The NPS restored the cherry laurel hedge lining the entrance drive in the Front Lawn.
Restored	The NPS restored the cherry laurel hedge that divides the Orchard from the Flower Garden and the Orchard from the Back Yard, removing the Callon period sasanqua and azalea hedges in the process.
Restored	The NPS restored the cherry laurel allée that lined the path from the Courtyard to the Vegetable Garden, however, the hedge is clipped at a lower height than it was historically.
Restored	The NPS restored the boxwood hedge beside the back porch of the Main House, removing the Callon period azaleas.
Restored	The NPS restored the cherry laurel hedge lining the walk to the Privy.
Removed	The NPS removed the Callon period brick paths on either side of the northern cistern house that led from the family parking lot to the courtyard. NPS also removed the large rose bed between these two paths.
Retained	The NPS retained the small storage shed added by the Kellys, located behind the Stable.
Retained	The NPS retained the gravel parking lot in the former location of the Vegetable Garden.
Altered	The NPS added a picnic area west of the parking lot in the former location of the Vegetable Garden.
Retained	The NPS retained the main entrance gates that the City of Natchez moved when constructing the Melrose-Montebello Parkway.
Retained	The NPS retained the Callons large loop road that encircles the Front Lawn as a walking path, instead of a vehicular route.

Removed	The NPS discontinued use of the gravel family parking area; however, evidence is still visible in the landscape of this former use in the form of a compacted gravel surface.
Retained	The NPS retained the road through the fields on the Montebello side of the property built by the Callons. This road uses short stretches of the old farm roads from the Kelly period, but much of it follows a new, more direct route established by the Callons. NPS straightened the alignment further, and now the road ties into the parking lot and circulation associated with the maintenance compound.
Retained	The NPS retained the Callon period concrete pad in front of the Main House steps. NPS retained the historic mounting block in the location established by the Callons.
Removed	The NPS removed azaleas planted by the Callons beside the portico. They also removed roses and azaleas planted on the south side of the Main House by the Callons.
Removed	The NPS removed the roses on eastern side of the cherry laurel allée leading from the Vegetable Garden to the Courtyard that the Callons planted. NPS also removed azaleas planted by the Callons on the north side of the Kitchen.
Rehabilitated	The NPS reinstalled the path across the Courtyard linking the Kitchen to the Dairy.
Removed	The NPS removed the Callon period azaleas in front of the porch columns of the Kitchen and Dairy.
Planted	The NPS replaced the Japanese yew hedge beside the Smokehouse with a cherry laurel hedge. The NPS also planted cherry laurel hedges to screen air conditioning equipment behind the Dairy and to the north of the Main House.
Removed	The NPS removed the Callon period foundation plantings surrounding the Slave Cabins.
Retained	The NPS retained the white walking gates retained by the Callons and built by the Kellys.

	Built	The NPS installed a reinforced turf path from the Dairy to entrance drive at the front of the Main House.
	Restored	The NPS restored a short section of a cherry laurel hedge along a circulation route on the south side of the former Vegetable Garden.
	Removed	The NPS removed the porch and carport addition added to the North Slave Cabin by the Callons.
	Built	The NPS built an exposed aggregate concrete walkway from the northwestern corner of the Courtyard to the parking lot located at the historic site of the Vegetable Garden. They added a large rectangular pad of the same material at the parking lot end of the walkway for accessibility.
	Planted	The NPS planted three of four pine trees along the missing entrance drive in the Front Lawn. The CLR recommended replanting all four of these trees, using pines. NPS planted a dogwood in place of the recommended fourth pine tree.
	Built	The NPS planted two red oak trees to replace two nineteenth century trees of the same species that were lost in the Front Lawn. One was thriving at the time of this report and the other had recently died.
	Built	The NPS attempted to interpret the historic entrance drive turnaround in the Front Lawn with decorative metal edging and groundcover plantings. This feature does not appear to encompass the full extent of the original route.
	Preserved	The NPS preserved two of the three nineteenth century camellias at the front of the Main House. One was lost to old age and the other two are in poor condition.
CE 1990	Retained	The NPS retained the parterre feature in the Flower Garden.
CE 1995	Removed	The NPS removed the gazebo constructed in the large pond by the Callons. (CLR 1996: 135)
CE 1996	Removed	The NPS removed the greenhouse constructed by the Callons. (CLR 1996: 135)



### Physical History:

#### Pre-Melrose

The title of Melrose has been traced and from 1782 onward and is on file in the Melrose archives. In 1790, Alexander Moore bought 430 arpents with a dwelling and other buildings. Several other transfers occurred, and in 1804, a U.S. Patent for 231 acres was granted to Robert Moore. In 1834, the estate of Robert Moore sold 132.91 acres (a portion of Mount Pleasant Plantation) to Henry Turner. On December 16, 1841, Henry Turner sold 132.92 acres to John T. McMurren. References to the site as the former “Moore’s field” are logical (CLR 1996: 67).

It is not certain what part of the holding of 231 acres became Mount Pleasant Plantation (1803) on which Alexander Moore resided and had a cotton gin, other houses, outhouses, kitchens, and stables, nor is it known whether part of Mount Pleasant purchased by Turner and then McMurren included any of these buildings or was just open ground (CLR 1996: 67).

A letter from 1841 refers to a claim to the “Moore’s field” which John McMurren had purchased for full price, and survey notes describe three lots which had originally belonged to Robert Moore but had been subdivided between John A. Quitman, Henry Turner, and Doctor John Herr (CLR 1996: 68)

The land that became Melrose had been planted prior to Melrose’s construction. Benjamin L.C. Wailes, the author of the 1854 Report on the Agriculture and Geology of Mississippi, visited Melrose in 1859 and referred to it as “...finely improved from an old waste cotton field a few years since by transplanting forest trees of many varieties.” How much of the property had been cleared for cultivation is unknown. The estimated age of the largest trees in the woodland edges of the property today indicates that this is not an area of virgin timber and that the woodlands, while mature, are not much over 150 years old (CLR 1996: 68).

#### The McMurren Occupancy (1841-1865)

When John T. McMurren married Mary Louisa Turner, her parents gave them a town home in Natchez known as Holly Hedges. In 1832, Edward Turner transferred Holly Hedges to the McMurrens and the following year Eliza Turner gave Hope Farm, an Adams County Plantation of 645 acres, along with 24 slaves, to the McMurrens. From that point on, the McMurrens joined the elite class of Natchez planters and slaveholders (CLR 1996: 68).

In 1835, the citizens of Mississippi elected John McMurren to the Mississippi House of Representatives, and the next year, the McMurrens sold Hope Farm. During the 1830s, McMurren amassed substantial profits from the legal work he performed as a bankruptcy lawyer.

John T. McMurren purchased a 132-acre tract of land east of Natchez in 1841, which would become the location of the home he built for his family, including his children and wife Mary Louisa Turner McMurren. A family friend, John Quitman, mentioned in a letter dated 1843, that

the McMurrans had some buildings completed and others under construction at that time. The first known use of the name Melrose for the estate appeared in an 1843 letter from family friend Eliza Quitman to her husband John. During the construction of their new home on the outskirts of town, the McMurrans maintained their primary residence in Natchez at Holly Hedges. Based on receipts for a large amount of lumber purchased by John McMurren in 1847, the principal construction date for the house is set in this year, even though earlier letters suggest building activity for several years prior. The McMurren family moved to Melrose in 1848.

Jacob Byers was the architect and builder of Melrose's primary buildings. He located the two-story Main House on the highest point on the property. This location is typical placement for a great house, and many of the other suburban villas that surround Natchez were similarly sited within their properties. The location of the house indicated the importance of the house and allowed its design to take advantage of the prevailing air movements to ventilate the home during the hot Mississippi summers. The arrangement of trees on either side of the Front Lawn funneled breezes toward the front of the house and to the back of the house. The courtyard space at the rear of the house also acted as a funnel, drawing in these air currents. The design of the Main House featured exterior walls of red-brown bricks laid in a common bond pattern. Byers intended the main mass of the home to be nearly cubical and to sit on a scored stucco foundation. The Main House also featured a monumental three-bay Doric portico on the primary (west) elevation and a two-story colonnade across the entire rear (east) elevation. Byers built the house in the Greek revival style. A picturesque entrance drive followed a curvaceous route through a grove of trees and around an ornamental pond planted with cypress trees before emerging at the front of the Main House. Kitchen and Dairy buildings were located behind (east) the Main House. Two stories tall and symmetrically arranged opposite each other, the front walls of both buildings aligned with the north and south walls of the Main House, creating an internal Courtyard with dimensions identical to the mass of the Main House. Beyond the Kitchen and Dairy, the architect located two Cisterns, the Main House Privy, and a Smokehouse. He designed the Main House Privy and Smokehouse as square, nearly identical brick buildings that faced each other across the Courtyard.

The archival record does not include a description of the process that the McMurrans used in designing, laying out and establishing the domestic landscape of Melrose. The only documentation of their activities in the landscape is references in family correspondence. McMurren family letters describe the role of the landscape in their domestic lives. The McMurren family travelled extensively and likely brought back ideas that shaped the eventual landscape of Melrose. In 1854, they toured Europe and visited fashionable picturesque landscapes in England and Scotland. Their letters refer to a variety of plants, including camellias, roses, jessamine, redbud, and magnolias. Period letters also confirm that the McMurrans used cherry laurel as hedges. Visitors to Melrose included architect Thomas Warton who toured the estate in 1859. He described it as "looking all the world like an English park." The picturesque elements of the McMurren landscape included the sweeping Entrance Drive that wound past an ornamental cypress pond and through clusters of evergreen trees, directing a visitor's views of the house during the approach. The landscape also provided long views across the meadow-like Front Lawn to the Front Field and beyond to a distant tree line.

Other known landscape features on the property during this period included an orchard, a kitchen garden, and a greenhouse. Mary Louisa mentions a 'green pit' in one of her letters. It is not clear whether this is the same structure as the greenhouse, or a separate pit or hotbed. These structures were common companion pieces for estates of this size that contained substantial kitchen gardens. There is no indication in the existing documentation as to where the McMurrans located these structures. There is also no mention of a specific flower garden in the family correspondence, only frequent mention of blooming plants. Family members mention hedges or "shrubbery walks" in the landscape, and one can assume these elements led from the house out into the picturesque landscape.

The McMurrans appear to have used gates and fences to subdivide the landscape into zones that reflected its use. In addition to the ornamental spaces, which were typically close to the house, there were also utilitarian spaces that supported the daily activities of the estate, like the Courtyard, Kitchen Garden, and the Stable Yard. Several buildings existed near the Stable Yard in this period, including two Slave Cabins, a Slave Privy, a Stable/Barn, a Carriage House, and a small Servant's Barn. The landscape would have included numerous utilitarian features associated with management of the estate, including animal pens, and walkways. The outer zone beyond the fence encircling the ornamental and domestic zones featured mostly fields for crops and livestock. The combination of features, workspaces, orchard, yards, fields and woods, created a rural setting that is characteristic of the picturesque landscape. McMurran created Melrose in the mode of the other magnificent suburban villa estates of Natchez that combined the convenience of living close to town with the advantages of a pastoral retreat. Although Melrose was a suburban villa, its spatial organization resembled that of a plantation with an inner residential and outer agricultural zone of substantially different designs. Although the entire landscape of Melrose had a picturesque informality in English style of landscape gardening, the inner zone was ordered by a Euclidean geometry based on the architecture of the Main House, while the outer zone responded more freely to topography (CLR 1996: 90).

The Civil War disrupted the plantation economy that supported the lavish lifestyles on display at suburban villas like Melrose and the McMurrans were hit by tragedy in the years surrounding it, changing their lives forever. Their son, John Jr., enlisted and went to Pensacola, Florida. In 1964 Mary Elizabeth McMurran Conner died at Melrose of an undiagnosed illness. Her daughter, Mary Louisa Conner died the same year on another family property, known as Woodlands, after her physician (who refused to take the oath of allegiance) was denied permission to cross federal lines near Melrose. Another family member, John McMurran Conner died at Melrose the next year of camp dysentery. By December of 1865, the family sold Melrose and most of its furnishings to Elizabeth Davis and George Malin Davis and moved to Woodlands. In 1866, John T. McMurran died tragically in a steamboat accident. His wife Mary lived at Woodlands until her passing in 1891 (CLR 1996: 83).

#### The Davis-Kelly Period (1865-1901)

George Malin Davis and Elizabeth Shunk Davis purchased Melrose from the McMurrans after the Civil War in December of 1865. Very little information exists concerning changes in the landscape during this period because the Davis family occasionally used Melrose but never took up permanent residence. Julia Davis Kelly, the daughter, inherited the estate in 1877. She and

her husband Dr. Stephen Kelly visited Melrose on several occasions, but never lived there permanently (Graphic 12). Their son, George Malin Davis Kelly inherited the property in 1883 at the age of seven. According to family history, they constructed a children's playhouse for young George Kelly to use during his visits.

From 1866 until 1901 Melrose was unoccupied by the family for significant periods. Two former Davis family slaves, who now worked for the family as servants, Jane Johnson and Alice Sims, lived in the outbuildings of Melrose and cared for the estate. According to family tradition, these two women resisted attempts by local residents to remove decorative arts from the house during the family's long absence. Little documentation of this period exists to date, and the CLI was unable to uncover new information. The CLR assumes that whatever care the formal plantings at Melrose received would have been either performed or supervised by Jane or Alice, basing this conclusion on the fact that ornamental plantings seem to have survived from this period and that a later account by Marian Ferry (granddaughter of Julia Davis) identifies these two women as guides to the former appearance of the ornamental grounds. Jane Johnson and Alice Sims may also have used some areas of Melrose for their own purposes during this time. Jane Johnson sold vegetables, eggs, and butter in Natchez and it seems likely that her small gardening and farming enterprises began while she was a caretaker of Melrose (CLR 1996: 87). The Davis family likely rented the outer fields to local farmers through an agent, though no records of these transactions have been uncovered.



*Graphic 12: View of Melrose circa 1889. (NATC Archives)*

#### The Kelly Rehabilitation and Occupancy Period (1901-1975)

In 1900, George Kelly, then living in New York City, married Ethel Moore. Not long after their marriage, George and Ethel Kelly visited Melrose and the other inherited Natchez properties including Concord, Choctaw, and Cherokee. Arriving late in the day after traveling to Natchez by train, it was already dark when they reached the Melrose. Their first glimpse of the Main House was by moonlight. Alice Sims and Jane Johnson had prepared Melrose for their arrival, and the estate made a great impression on George and Ethel Kelly. During this visit, they decided to restore Melrose and make it their primary residence. Upon deciding to restore the

property, The Kellys decided to do something unheard of at the time, making a conscious decision to preserve the house and retain all of the original furnishings, which by then were sixty years old and out of style. They repaired and retained all of the original outbuildings and attempted to return the grounds to their antebellum appearance with guidance from Jane Johnson and Alice Sims. Surviving family members indicate that Jane Johnson was the driving force behind the operation of Melrose and its restoration by Ethel Kelly.

It is important to acknowledge that while the Kellys intention was to “restore” Melrose to its antebellum appearance, the preservation efforts the family carried out have more in common with rehabilitation as defined by Secretary of the Interior Standards, as the Kellys certainly made changes to the property to meet their personal needs and tastes.

George Kelly commissioned two surveys of the property by J. W. Babbit, a Natchez surveyor, to document the condition of the property. The 1908 survey includes a map that illustrates many of the significant features of the estate, including the location of buildings, fences, and gates, circulation routes, and the configuration of open space and woods (Graphic 13). Photographs taken by the Kellys during the first decade of the twentieth century show the condition of the buildings and landscape at that time (Graphic 14, Graphic 15, Graphic 16, Graphic 17, Graphic 18, Graphic 19, and Graphic 20). The buildings appear deteriorated, likely from decades of neglect. The landscape was decidedly picturesque, with large spreading trees that date from the McMurren era landscape. The maturity of trees growing along the edges of woods and trees growing along fencerows confirm that the edges and fences were not new in 1905 but more likely date from the McMurren period. Gaps are visible in the cherry laurel hedges, but their maturity and appearance reaffirm the feeling that the photographs capture the McMurren landscape fifty years after its installation (Graphic 21). Photographs also show mature *Camellia japonica* shrubs in near the front entrance to the Main House. These early photographs combined with the 1908 survey, provide the first clear picture of the mature nineteenth century landscape at Melrose being preserved and rehabilitated by the Kellys under the guidance of Alice Sims and Jane Johnson.

When the Kellys decided to rehabilitate Melrose, they agreed to retain most of the original features of the buildings and landscape. They made upgrades to the Main House, adding a bathroom and furnace, but made an extraordinary effort to minimize the impact on the historic structures. The Kellys approached the landscape with a similar respect for its original design, which resulted in the preservation of many of the historic plants and spatial organization. They established a dairy operation and rented the outer agricultural fields, which perpetuated the rural character of the estate. They converted the old Dairy building into a garage, adding doors to the west elevation to accommodate their automobile. They also constructed several new farm buildings, but they were located around the perimeter of the Stable Yard and did not disrupt the spatial character of that area. They replaced the old stack wooden rail fences with more modern wire and post fences, but largely kept their historic alignments and preserved the configuration of the fields (Graphic 22). They restored the cherry laurel hedges that subdivided the interior zones into discrete spaces (Graphic 23).

The Kellys rehabilitated the ornamental grounds, replanting trees, hedges, shrubs, perennials,

and bulbs, based on the remembrances of Jane Johnson and Alice Sims. The arrangement of trees around the perimeter of the Front Lawn remained the same as that seen in the early 20th century panorama photographs (See Graphic 20). The Kellys apparently replaced some trees when they died, but they did not replant several large trees growing immediately in front of the house. Mrs. Kelly replanted the gardens around the house, introducing new plants while generally following the nineteenth century layout. According to family history, Mrs. Kelly walked around the grounds with Jane Johnson and Alice Sims, who showed her the original layout of the gardens and described the kinds of plants that historically grew in the beds (Graphic 24). In the flower garden, Ethel Kelly reestablished a path network following the advice of Alice Sims and Jane Johnson. This network lacked the usual straight lines of formal gardens or the curvilinear lines of informal gardens of the Victorian era. It is impossible to know how closely these paths followed the nineteenth century originals, but the attempt at restoration is noteworthy. According to Alice Sims and Jane Johnson, boxwoods lined the paths originally; however, Mrs. Kelly elected to define them with flowering bulbs instead (CLR 1996: 112). Ethel Kelly also restored a small formal brick parterre garden feature within the Flower Garden based on the knowledge of Alice Sims and Jane Johnson combined with the surviving physical evidence. It is interesting to note that this feature does not appear on either of the surveys undertaken by Babbitt at the time. According to the CLR, after the Kellys completed their rehabilitation of Melrose at the beginning of the twentieth century, they made few further changes to the property afterward, and the landscape entered into a period of homeostasis. (CLR 1996: 107)

Mrs. Kelly was one of the founders of the Natchez Garden Club and the Natchez Pilgrimage. Melrose was open for the first Pilgrimage tours in 1932 and the house and grounds remained open for every Pilgrimage until 1974 (Graphic 25). The resultant gardens were a combination of Mrs. Kelly's own personal taste in plants and her appreciation for historic gardens. She introduced a large number of azaleas to Melrose, planting massive groupings to provide color during the spring Pilgrimage (Graphic 26). Later in life, she added an azalea hedge at the edge of the Front Lawn that changed the spatial character by reducing its perceived size and blocking the long view that was part of the historic picturesque landscape. This hedge replaced the post and wire fence that existed here previously. She also planted numerous other trees and shrubs around the grounds in the same style and using the same plants that characterized the original garden, including crape myrtles, camellias, and roses. According to Park staff, Kelly also added brick walkways to the Melrose grounds after their home at Concord burned down in 1901 and added multiple ornamental walking gates to the property. Kelly reconstructed the brick parterre feature a second time in the 1940s following the lines of the previous feature that was in poor condition at the time. Northwest of the parterre, the Kellys installed a grass tennis court, which they used until the 1940s. The Kellys replanted the orchard with a variety of trees, including apples, pears, and figs. They installed an ornamental wrought iron gate originally from the grounds of another house they owned in Natchez, called Cherokee, at the entrance to the Orchard. They also maintained the Vegetable Garden north of the house, where it had probably been located during the McMurran period. They constructed a new dam across a tributary of the Spanish Bayou to make a large pond on the north side of the estate between the Vegetable Garden and the property line. The dam washed out in the 1950s and the family did not repair it.

The maintenance of the grounds and gardens was labor intensive, and the Kellys restored a level of care not seen on the estate since the McMurran period. They hired multiple overseers and at least five full-time employees to maintain the grounds, run the dairy operation, and to farm the outer fields (Graphic 27). Jane Johnson and Alice Sims both lived and worked at Melrose until their deaths in the mid twentieth century. Alice Sims bedroom was upstairs in the Dairy building, and Jane Johnson lived in the three-room former slave cabin. Family members referred to the open area south of this building as “Aunt Alice’s Barnyard”. This area also contained a small barn, known today as the Servant’s Barn, which Alice Sims and Jane Johnson used as a place to keep their horses and livestock. According to an interview conducted as part of the CLR process with Fred Page who worked for the Kellys during this period, African Americans at Melrose:

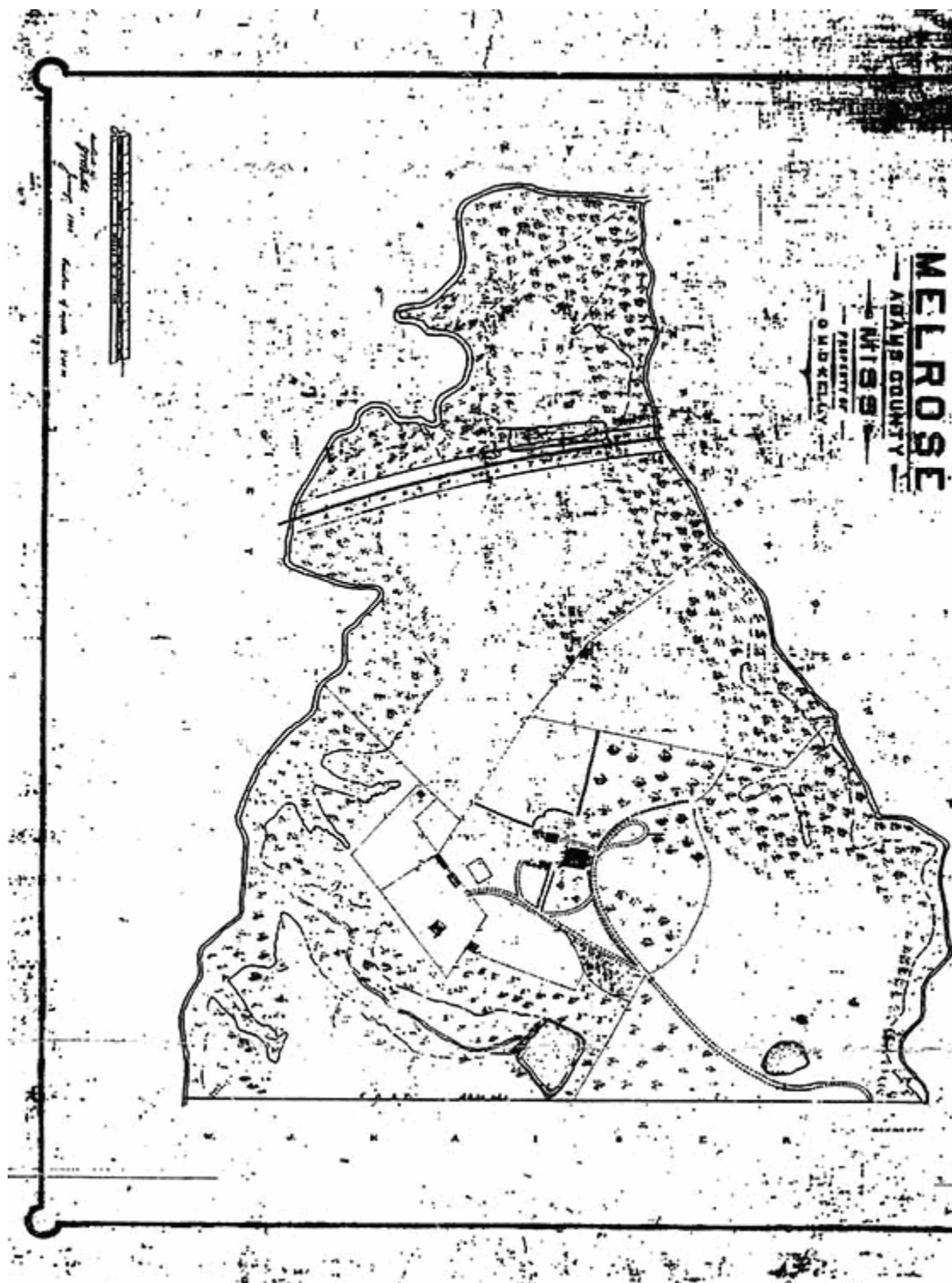
“...didn’t keep horses and livestock in with Mrs. Kelly’s. Everything was separate in the old days. The black horses were in one section, and the white ones were in another lot. If you were a black person and you had your own horses, you didn’t put them in with the white people’s horses to graze. Everything was separate.”

The Kellys relied on African American employees to maintain the grounds, operate the dairy and they always rented the outer fields to African Americans. Ed Barland was the first overseer employed by the Kellys. George Screws succeeded him sometime in the 1920s. In 1950, Nelson Foster took over the job, who in turn was replaced by Charlie Johnson. Milton Carter of Watkins Street in Natchez rented the outer fields in the 1950s while the Kellys employed his wife, Phoebe Carter as a maid. After he passed away, Eddie Marks rented the outer fields. Also from Natchez, he lived on Daisy Street. The Kellys installed a new dirt road system to accommodate their farming activities. These new farm roads allowed their workers and renters to access their fields without having to travel through the interior zone of the property, separating the inner and outer zones of the property completely (Graphic 28).

Between 1930 and 1950, the Kellys made very few changes to the Melrose landscape. The area around Melrose began to change as residential development began to encroach upon the boundaries of the estate. After World War II, developers constructed Roselawn Subdivision on the adjacent parcel on land that had once been home to Mrs. McMurran’s sister Fanny Conner. Montebello School went onto the historic Montebello estate across the Spanish Bayou east of Melrose. Duncan Park and Golf Course occupied the historic site of Auburn west of Melrose.

George Kelly died in 1946, leaving the property to Ethel. The same year Jane Johnson died at the age of 103. In the 1950s, the grounds began a period of decline as Mrs. Kelly did not repair features, like the dam, and did not maintain the previous level of attention given to the gardens (Graphic 29). In 1972, the City of Natchez acquired a right of way to construct the Melrose-Montebello Parkway along the western property line. After construction of the Parkway, Mrs. Kelly allowed volunteer trees and shrubs to grow up along the azalea hedge between the front lawn and front field to minimize traffic noise and block the view of the roadway. Mrs. Kelly continued to live at Melrose until her death in 1975.

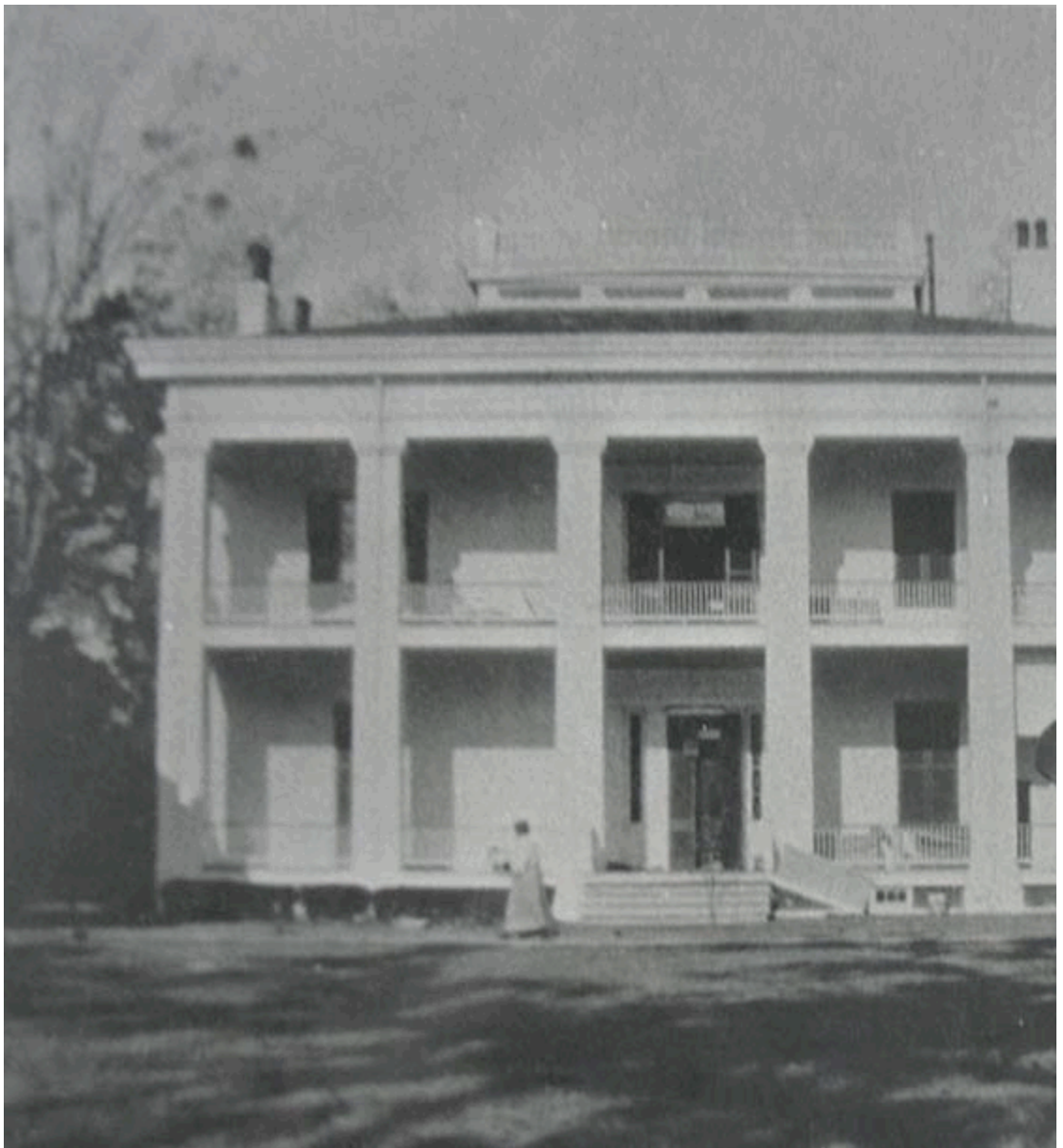




*Graphic 13: Babbit Survey, 1908 (NATC).*

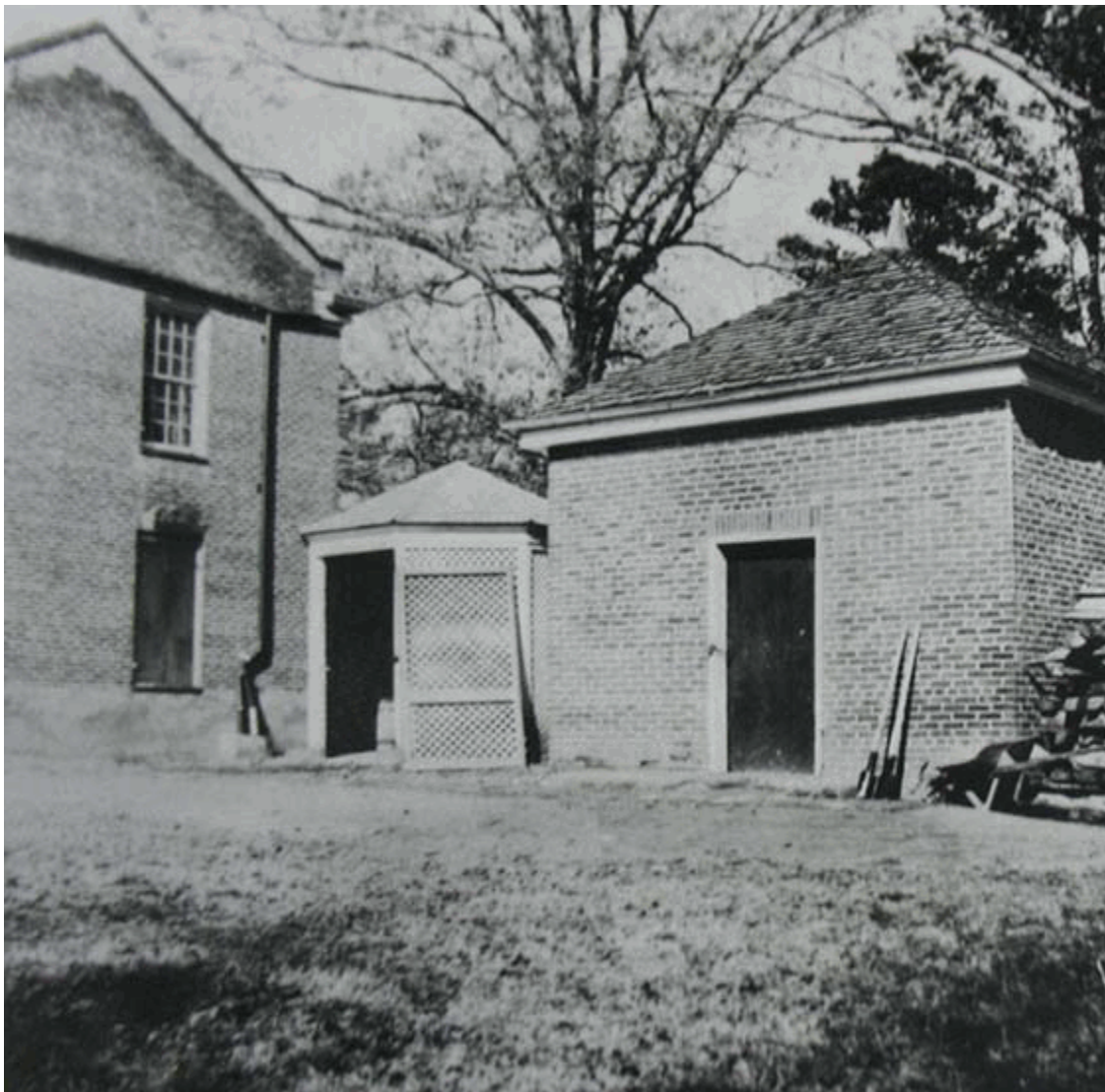


*Graphic 14: Front View Main House, c. 1900 (NATC).*



*Graphic 15: Rear View of Main House, c. 1900 (NATC).*





*Graphic 16: View of Dairy Cistern House and Smokehouse, c. 1905-1910 (NATC).*



*Graphic 17: View of Front Field and Cypress Pond, c. 1905-1910 (NATC).*



*Graphic 18: View of Stable Yard with Carriage House and Barn, c. 1905-1910 (NATC).*





*Graphic 19: View of Stable Yard with Barn and Animals, c. 1905-1910 (NATC).*



*Graphic 20: Front Lawn, c. 1910 (NATC).*





*Graphic 21: Jane Johnson with cherry laurel allée, c. 1910 (NATC).*



*Graphic 22: Fences and Gate at Stable Yard, c. 1910 (NATC).*



*Graphic 23: Entrance Drive Hedge, c. 1910 (NATC).*





*Graphic 24: George and Ethel Kelly in Flower Garden with Friends, c. 1910 (NATC).*



*Graphic 25: Melrose during Pilgrimage, mid 20th century (NATC).*





*Graphic 26: Melrose during Pilgrimage, mid 20th century (NATC).*

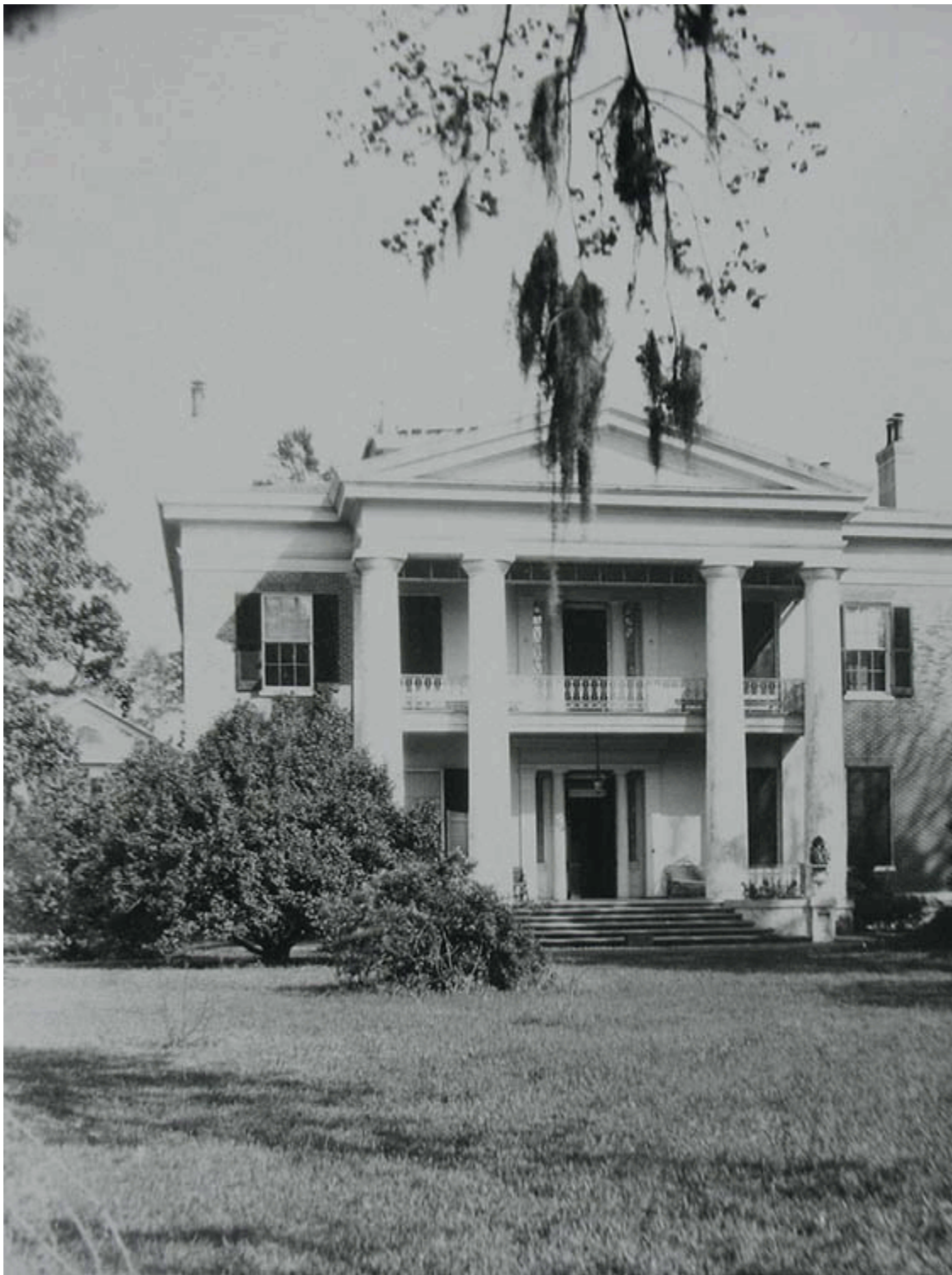


*Graphic 27: Melrose Work Force, early 20th century (NATC).*



*Graphic 28: Melrose Farm Road, c. 1910-1930 (NATC).*





*Graphic 29: Front View of Main House, c. 1960 (NATC).*

#### The Callon Period (1976-1990)

In June 1976, the heirs of Ethel Kelly sold Melrose to John and Betty Callon. The estate contained 85 acres. The decrease in acreage is due to the construction of the Melrose-Montebello Parkway, fluctuations in the shoreline of the Spanish Bayou, and the development of the railroad at the property's southern end. The Callons converted Melrose to a place to entertain friends and accommodate overnight visitors. John Callon had business connections in Hollywood and Melrose was the set for several motion pictures during the period. The Callons also opened Melrose year round to the public. Paying guests could tour the house and rent a room in the Main House, Kitchen, or Dairy. The Callons extensively altered the buildings and grounds to facilitate this new use. They did grant a historic preservation easement to the Mississippi Department of Archives and History in 1977 that protected the 40 acres around the Main House.

The Callons discontinued farming the outer fields and removed many of the old fences that defined the outdoor spaces devoted to work. Young trees quickly occupied the abandoned fields. They also removed the Kellys' cherry laurel hedges from around the ornamental grounds within the inner zones of the property. The result is that the historic spaces, many dating from the antebellum period, lost their spatial definition during the Callon occupancy. They removed all the farm buildings that the Kellys had added to the estate with the exception of a small storage shed behind the stable. They removed the fences and other features that made the Stable Yard identifiable (Graphic 30, compare with Graphic 22). They rebuilt the dam, enlarged the Kelly period pond, and added a gazebo. The Callons also added a fishing pier on the east end of the large pond. They built a small greenhouse in the field east of the orchard and two pump houses. The pump house in the woods south of the orchard provided water to the irrigation system, and the pump house near the north property line supplied water to the pond.

The Callons also implemented a planting program to beautify the grounds, adding trees and shrubs in all areas around the house. They employed William Garbo, a landscape architect from Jackson, Mississippi, but only partially implemented his plan. They added more azalea hedges around the front yard, near the Main House, and along their newly added roads. They abandoned the flower garden paths, but renovated the parterre feature rebuilding the structure, removing Mrs. Kelly's monkey grass, and placing boxwoods around the edges. They filled the garden with scattered groupings of shrubs and perennials (Graphic 31).

The Callons installed a new road network to accommodate visitors. They reconstructed a gate at the new main entrance relocated during the construction of the Melrose-Montebello Parkway (Graphic 32). Visitors coming to Melrose followed the historic entrance road to its junction with a farm road added during the Kelly period. Rather than continue towards the Main House, visitors took the farm road towards a large parking lot the Callons added in the location of the historic Vegetable Garden. The Callons specifically designed this parking lot to accommodate large buses. They constructed a second parking lot near the Smokehouse for the family and overnight visitors use. The family established a small rose garden adjacent to this smaller lot. They added a new road across the Front Lawn to provide visitors views of the front of the house. They abandoned the original loop road and the road from the front of the house to

the Stable Yard that passed the north side of the Main House. The Callons also abandoned obsolete farm roads in the outer zone and removed some Kelly period outbuildings. The Callons relocated the Melrose Playhouse from its original location to a site southeast of the Dairy building. They did construct a new road through the fields southeast of the house that connected with the Melrose-Montebello Parkway near its intersection with the railroad. The Callons sold the land south of the railroad to the International Paper Realty Corporation in the 1980s reducing the size of the estate to 78.68 acres.



*Graphic 30: View of Stable Yard, c. 1977-1980, (NATC).*





*Graphic 31: Flower Garden, c. 1977-1990 (NATC).*



*Graphic 32: The Callons reconstruct the front entrance gate, c. 1977-1980, (NATC).*

#### National Park Service Period (1990-Present) (2011)

The NPS acquired Melrose in 1990 to be a unit within the Natchez National Historical Park. The NPS established Natchez National Historical Park in October 1988 in order to preserve and interpret the history of Natchez. In the 1990s, the NPS initiated a number of planning studies that documented the historic structures and historic landscape of the various park units including Melrose. Ann Beha and Associates prepared a Historic Resource Study, a Historic Structures Report, and a Cultural Landscape Report (CLR) for the estate.

Early in their care of the property, the NPS removed two Callon period structures: the gazebo at the large pond and the greenhouse. They constructed a maintenance complex near the corner of the property at the intersection of the railroad and Melrose-Montebello Parkway. The complex has expanded with the addition of storage facilities and, more recently, two parking pads for recreational vehicles (RVs). The NPS also constructed a museum storage building east of the Servant's Barn.

The NPS also implemented a number of the treatment recommendations from the CLR. In the late 1990s, the NPS replanted the cherry laurel hedges along the entrance drive and reestablished the cherry laurel hedge around the orchard and along the walkway from the dairy building to the privy (Graphic 33). In some cases, the NPS interplanted these hedges with Cherokee rose (*Rosa laevigata*), interpreting the recommendations of Thomas Affleck, a well-known horticulturalist in Natchez, MS during the antebellum period. As recommended in the CLR, the NPS removed numerous azalea hedges in order to recreate the historic spatial character of the estate. These include a line of large shrubs along the road across the Front Lawn. The NPS has replanted trees that have died or succumbed to storm damage, including several pine trees and numerous hardwoods in the Front Lawn. They have planted young native hardwood trees, many of which appear to be CLR recommendations, across the property. They have also planted hardwood trees along the north property line in order to develop a buffer to screen views of the adjacent residential neighborhood. The NPS has been treating invasive exotics since the early 2000s. Kudzu and Chinese tallow trees are especially problematic in the present landscape. The NPS performed an inventory of invasive exotic plant species in 2006.

The NPS reconstructed the brick walkways in the Courtyard in the 1990s using a flat design instead of the original “turtleback” design for accessibility reasons and safety. The NPS crews installed an aggregate/concrete walkway to the parking lot. They restored the antebellum cherry allée to the Vegetable Garden along this new walkway. They have tried unsuccessfully to establish stabilized turf paths in two locations, south of the Main House and at the entrance into the Carriage House. They added picnic tables and trash receptacles near the main parking area. In 2012, Fred Page, a former NPS employee who also worked for the Kelly family, recalled the general location of an African-American Cemetery, located south of the Orchard.





*Graphic 33: National Park Service walkway and cherry laurel allée, c. 1995 (NATC).*

## Analysis & Evaluation of Integrity

### Analysis and Evaluation of Integrity Narrative Summary:

The National Register of Historic Places identifies seven qualities that define historic integrity. These aspects of integrity include location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. A cultural landscape with integrity retains enough historic fabric to convey to an observer the significance of the site. Over the course of its history of development, Melrose has accumulated landscape features that collectively define the character of the place and contribute to its significance as a historic landscape. This CLI compares the existing conditions of those features with their historic appearance to determine whether the landscape currently retains historic integrity.

The most important documentation of the nineteenth century landscape installed by the McMurrans and subsequently rehabilitated by the Kellys is a series of panoramic photos and surveys that date to the first decade of the twentieth century. These photos show the mature McMurren landscape fifty years after its installation in a state of decline. They also show the beginning of the Kelly family rehabilitation efforts, documenting the landscape in transition. The Kelly family took this series of photographs of Melrose and commissioned the surveys from 1903-1908. During the production of a CLR, Robinson Fisher took photographs from the same viewpoints in 1995 and 1996. The Jaeger Company reshot the images in 2011 for use in evaluating the integrity of the site. Appendix A compiles these photographs for comparison.

The landscape characteristics of Melrose convey the history of a suburban villa in Natchez, Mississippi from the antebellum period through its preservation in the early twentieth century. The natural systems, spatial organization, land use, topography, vegetation, circulation, buildings and structures, views and vistas, constructed water features, and small-scale features contribute to the character of the landscape and include features of historic significance for both the nineteenth and twentieth century periods of significance.

The natural systems of Melrose are the Spanish Bayou, the climate, and the site's unique soils. Spanish Bayou continues to define the eastern property boundary of the estate, despite minor changes in its course from the periods of significance. The hot and humid climate of Mississippi played a role in the original site planning for the estate. The builder located the buildings to take advantage of prevailing breezes, constructing deep porches on many of them to provide shade. This was common practice in the antebellum Natchez and indeed continues to this day in the city. The climate remains much as it did during both periods of significance, though perhaps somewhat warmer, due to the effects of global climate change. The soils at Melrose are all of the Loess type, a characteristic soil found in the region. These fragile soils are agriculturally productive and highly erodible, resulting in deep gullies with steep banks, a characteristic feature of the historic "sunken roads" surrounding Natchez as well as the bluff upon which the city was built. Loess soils remain at Melrose and the effects of erosion are visible in the steep banks of the Spanish Bayou.

The spatial organization of the estate into distinct inner and outer zones conveys the history of vernacular site planning of antebellum plantation landscapes in Natchez, which were often organized in



this manner. In both periods of significance, the inner residential zone of Melrose was residential and formalized, while the outer zone was informal and devoted to work, agriculture and maintenance of the estate. The landscape continues to convey this historic division today, though some integrity is lost due to the lack of fences that historically defined these areas. A core of buildings and formal ornamental hedges characterize the inner zone of the property, while the less formal outer zone of the estate is comprised of open fields, woodlands, and maintenance areas.

While Melrose no longer functions as a residence or a working agricultural landscape, the use of the site by the NPS as a historic house museum continues the tradition established by the Kellys of opening the house to the public during the Natchez Pilgrimage. This continued use of the property to display antebellum life to visitors through the preservation of the house and grounds continues an important historic use of the site. The use of the estate during the McMurran period as a place to display the incredible wealth of an elite planter family and their status in antebellum society continues to the present day.

The topography of Melrose has changed little from the antebellum period. Melrose remains comprised of gently rolling hills. The buildings and agricultural fields of Melrose continue to occupy the most level ground on the property with the steeper terrain occupied by woodland, representing typical suburban villa site planning in Natchez. A topographic feature and soil conservation device intended to prevent runoff in a storm from concentrating and eroding a gully, known as a level spreader, persists in the front agricultural field at Melrose. This feature, common in agricultural fields in Natchez, helps to convey the historic character of the working landscape of the estate.

Vegetation contributes to the historic character of Melrose. The existing informal organization of mature canopy trees and ornamental shrubs throughout the property reflects the picturesque arrangement recorded in the turn of the century panoramic photos of the mature McMurran landscape by the Kellys. The ornamental hedges that define the different land uses within the inner zone of the property reflect the historic condition during both the McMurran and Kelly periods. The patterns of open fields and woodlands in the property's outer zone also help to convey the site's association with antebellum southern cotton culture and the desire of the Kelly family to preserve those traditions. Although individual plants dating from the antebellum and Kelly periods retain integrity, it is the cumulative effect of the existing landscape that retains the most integrity. Later sections of this report discuss these individual resources in detail.

The circulation system, while altered, retains integrity. The entrance drive and other farm roads continue to provide access to the outer buildings of work including the Stable, Carriage House, and Slave Cabins as they did during the McMurran and Kelly periods. While much of the formal pedestrian circulation existing in the courtyard and inner zone of the property does not consist of original material, it follows the historic routes established during the McMurran period and preserved by the Kellys. The lack of walking paths within the Flower Garden from the Kelly historic period remains a deficiency.

The historic buildings and structures at Melrose include the Main House and its dependencies, all of which retain a high degree of integrity, exemplifying nineteenth century high style and vernacular

architecture and construction. A few twentieth century agricultural buildings remain from the Kelly period, providing examples of the vernacular building techniques of that period.

Important views remain in the landscape and retain integrity for both historic periods. The view from the front steps of the Main House across the front fields is consistent with the view from this location during the McMurren and the early Kelly periods. An oblique view of the front of the house from the entrance drive is available to pedestrians only today, whereas during both historic periods visitors to the site would have experienced this glimpse of the house from a carriage or vehicle. A view of the Main House from the original site entrance remains in an altered state due to the construction of the Melrose-Montebello Parkway. Both of these glimpses of the house were an important part of the picturesque entry sequence designed by the McMurrens and preserved by the Kellys. Views from the rear Courtyard to the Slave Cabins and agricultural outbuildings also remain from both periods, as well a view across the Orchard.

An ornamental cypress pond retains a high degree of integrity for both periods of significance. The pond remains essentially unaltered from the antebellum period. A larger pond located in the northeast portion of the property, built by the Kellys and later expanded by the Callons, retains diminished integrity but helps to convey the historic character of the Kelly period.

The small-scale features include historic features of daily life at Melrose during both periods. Urn planters and a mounting block associated with the front of the Main House date from the McMurren period and persist in the landscape. These features help to convey the lifestyle of the planter aristocracy. From the Kelly period three ornamental walking gates, various gateposts, fence remnants, cast iron urns, and an iron orchard gate all remain in the landscape helping visitors understand life at Melrose during the Kelly occupancy and the value the family placed on preserving items from the past. The removal of fences that defined the inner and outer zones of the property in the late twentieth century diminishes the integrity of the small-scale features from both periods, though remnant fence from the Kelly period does remain in places.

#### INTEGRITY

The physical elements of the landscape and structures retain integrity. Several large trees and shrubs date to the Kelly rehabilitation of the landscape undertaken in the early twentieth century, and a few camellias and other species of trees and shrubs date from the McMurren period. The building materials of the main house and outbuildings remain intact from their date of construction and preserve the repairs and minor alterations completed by the Kellys, the Callons, and the NPS. The integrity of workmanship persists in the superb craftsmanship of the nineteenth century buildings. All of the historic buildings remain in their historic locations providing integrity of location. All surviving elements of the picturesque design of the landscape retain integrity. Although the construction of the Melrose-Montebello Parkway and the sale of a portion of the original estate south of the railroad diminish the integrity of the setting, the estate retains much of its historic character and the majority of its original landholdings. The cumulative effect of the historic buildings nestled into a mature picturesque landscape result in a high integrity of feeling for both periods of significance. The buildings

of Melrose, along with their original furnishings best reflect the site's association with Southern plantation economy and society, while the landscape is most representative of the Kelly family's early efforts in the American Historic Preservation Movement.

Location:

All the surviving historic buildings at Melrose that date from the McMurran period remain in their original locations. The vehicular and pedestrian circulation features from this first period of significance are in their original locations, though there have been, over the subsequent decades, additions to the network and slight alignment-modifications to the roads, decreasing integrity. Much of the pedestrian system is replacement, but it appears to be in the historic alignment. The location of the external property boundaries have changed slightly, with the construction of the Melrose-Montebello Parkway along the western edge of the property and the divestment of a parcel on the south corner of the property beyond the railroad. The locations of internal boundaries have also changed since fences related to spatial organization no longer exist from the McMurran and Kelly periods of significance. As a result, the distinctions between the inner and outer zones of the property are difficult to perceive. The NPS restoration of the cherry laurel hedges within the inner zone of the property lends integrity to both the McMurran and Kelly periods. Although reconstructed multiple times, the parterre feature in the flower garden retains integrity of location for the Kelly period. Three walking gates, built by the Kellys at points along the boundary of the inner zone of the property remain in reconstructed form in their original locations lending additional integrity to the Kelly period.

Design:

The picturesque design of the landscape is evident because of the survival of many antebellum features in good condition, including the ornamental cypress pond, the winding front entrance road along the edge of an open field, the mature trees framing the house, and views towards and from the Main House across the Front Lawn. Many of the changes in the design of the landscape resulted from changes in its management and from natural changes related to the growth and decline of vegetation. Man-made alterations to the design include changes to the road network, removal of fences and hedges, the conversion of the vegetable garden to a parking lot, and the near total conversion in the character of the Stable and slave quarters area from a working landscape to its current condition.

Setting:

Despite significant changes in land use outside the boundaries of Melrose, the overall setting of the estate retains much of its historic character. The mature vegetation and classical-revival architecture provide visitors with an accurate glimpse of what the estate might have been like in the 1840s and certainly during the Kelly period. The woods around the perimeter of the property largely buffer the visual impact that adjacent neighborhoods might otherwise have on the setting. Similarly, a vegetated berm adjacent to the Melrose-Montebello Parkway effectively screens views of the modern road from within the property. The NPS is continuing to plant trees around the perimeter of the open spaces expanding the existing woodland edge buffer between the interior of the property and the adjacent property.

Materials:

The historic buildings retain much of their original material. There are several specimen trees that likely date from the nineteenth century; but the majority of the existing plant material that appear to be part of the designed landscape, date from the Kelly rehabilitation of the property in the early twentieth century. For example, mature trees and shrubs fill the flower garden area and create the feeling of a historic garden, though it is clear that a majority of the existing plant material does not date to the antebellum period. It is unclear the extent to which the existing plant material, mostly dating from the Kelly period, recreates the appearance of the flower garden from the McMurren period, as detailed documentation from that period does not exist. The woodland areas feature large historic trees but are mainly composed of naturally generated species typical for the region. A large number of invasive exotic species exists in many of the woodland areas of the estate, diminishing integrity. Rows of large trees currently mark the location of missing fences. Most of the fence material has been lost except from occasional remnants of Kelly period wire fence found nailed to trees in a few locations. Most of the paving material is also twentieth century. The Callons and the NPS replaced much of the bricks as part of upgrades to the walkways around the house. The NPS top-dresses the farm roads with gravel, which were historically dirt. In addition, the parterre feature in the Flower Garden consists of replacement materials dating from the Callon period, diminishing its integrity.

Workmanship:

The buildings and structures most accurately reflect quality of workmanship from the antebellum period. The building materials of Main House and its outbuildings remain intact from their original construction and preserve repairs completed the Kellys, Callons, and the NPS. The NPS reconstructed three ornamental walking gates, replacing the Kelly period features with in kind material. The parterre in the Flower Garden features landscape construction techniques common in the late twentieth century, when it was last reconstructed. Iron urn planters that flank the front steps of Melrose reflect McMurren period workmanship practices and the cast iron urns associated with the parterre reflect early twentieth century workmanship.

Workmanship is less evident in and less critical to the landscape because of the ephemeral quality of plant material and other landscape features such as fences. Workmanship in the landscape of Melrose is most apparent in maintenance practices, which greatly influence the appearance of the landscape. Slaves maintained the property during the McMurren period, which allowed for highly labor-intensive maintenance. Hired laborers maintained the property during the Kelly period in much the same manner, using limited machinery (CLR 1996: 154). During the Callon and the NPS periods, maintenance has trended toward mechanized and motorized equipment. This maintenance regimen results in a simplified landscape with diminished integrity.

Feeling:

The overall visual effect of Melrose, with the historic buildings and a mature landscape, is remarkably picturesque and evocative of that historic landscape aesthetic. The picturesque design elements remain strongest in the landscape in the front of the Main House, which retains the feeling of a grand house in a picturesque setting consisting of maintained lawn with carefully located specimen trees and shrubs. The preserved landscape at Melrose allows visitors to feel like they have “stepped back in time” when

they enter the property. This feeling remains strongest in areas away from the modern additions that facilitate public use of the site. These modern anachronisms, like the parking lot, collection storage building, and maintenance buildings, are visual intrusions that diminish the historic feeling. The zones that were historically places related to work, husbandry, or agriculture are now sterile and less dynamic than they were during the historic periods. With no animals, fences, or suggestion of farming or activity in the landscape, Melrose no longer conveys the feeling of a working landscape. The courtyard, historically cluttered with evidence of daily work, now reads as an ornamental space unreflective of its historic character. The loss of characteristic features within the site, e.g. fences, also detracts from the historic feeling of Melrose. The Flower Garden conveys the Kelly period of significance, despite the fact that the original layout is unclear. Mature plant material and the quality of light filtered through the canopy trees give the impression of a historic garden offering visitors a powerful experience. Although a restored cherry laurel hedge defines the approximate historic dimensions of the Orchard, the Orchard itself no longer contains enough plant material to convey the feeling associated with an active grove of trees devoted to fruit production.

**Association:**

The intact and mostly unaltered mansion and outbuildings convey the site's association with antebellum plantation culture. The architecture, interior, furnishings and landscape all retain direct links with their original nineteenth century forms (CLR 1996: 147). The landscape is less effective because of changes in land use and maintenance has altered the overall appearance of the site. The landscape is generally more reflective of the Kellys' rehabilitation of the property, which illustrates an important aspect of the American Historic Preservation Movement in America. The preservation ethic applied to property management distinguishes Melrose from many historic properties of the same period. The fact that the Kellys were mindful and committed to this approach in the early years of the twentieth century is remarkable. In most areas of the south, this interest in the past and protection of historic resources started in the 1920s at the earliest (CLR 1996: 147). The fact that the Kellys based their rehabilitation and preservation of the grounds on the remembrances of two former slaves, Jane Johnson and Alice Sims, who transitioned from slavery to freedom on the estate and who lived on Melrose until their deaths in the 1940s, adds to the uniqueness of the preservation story.

NOTE: Graphics in the following Landscape Characteristic sections are keyed to a print copy of the CLI available in pdf. See David Hasty, SERO.

**Aspects of Integrity:**

Location  
Design  
Setting  
Materials  
Workmanship  
Feeling  
Association

**Landscape Characteristic:**

## Land Use

### MCMURRAN PERIOD

During the nineteenth century, Melrose was at the end of the road from Natchez, along which stood several other suburban villas from the antebellum period. Wealthy Natchez planters built mansions on the outskirts of town as embodiments of their status in society and as displays of their wealth. Suburban estates also avoided the crowding and disease of downtown – a major concern at the time. The suburban villas were not working plantations - those were elsewhere - but grand estates that allowed plantation owners to enjoy the comforts of countryside living close to the culture of town. The McMurrans used Melrose as their primary residence. The area around the Main House included ornamental grounds and work yards. A discrete distance from the Main House, a group of farm buildings, including a Stable, Carriage House, and two Slave Cabins, surrounded a Stable Yard. The outer area of the estate was agricultural and featured a series of open fields used to grow crops, probably cotton or corn, and to pasture livestock.

### DAVIS-KELLY PERIOD

The land use during this period remains something of a mystery. Jane Johnson and Alice Sims lived on the property and took care of it during this time. They may also have used some areas of Melrose for their own purposes during this period as Jane Johnson sold vegetables, eggs, and butter in Natchez later in life and it seems likely that her small gardening and farming enterprises began while she was a caretaker of Melrose. The Davis family probably rented the outer fields to local farmers through an agent, though no records of these transactions exist.

### KELLY PERIOD

The Kellys' use of the property was similar to the McMurrans', resulting in an appearance consistent with the earlier period. The Kellys continued farming and rented the outer fields to local farmers. They produced hay and corn. They also began a small dairy operation on the property.

The Kellys used the landscape around the Main House as an extension of the dwelling. The Kellys extensively rehabilitated the ornamental grounds of Melrose, replanting trees and shrubs to recapture its original character. The Kelly landscape also had work spaces associated with the functioning of the Main House. The Courtyard and Back Yard, different in use and character from the ornamental grounds, showed evidence of a working landscape with features like piles of wood, carts, and dog pens visible in photographs taken during the early years of their occupancy.

### CALLON PERIOD

After acquiring the property in 1976, John and Betty Callon used Melrose as their home and a place to entertain guests. They opened the house to daily tours and converted the dependencies into guest quarters. The Callons discontinued farming, resulting in a dramatic change in the outer area of Melrose. They removed the historic hedges and fences to simplify maintenance. The area stretching from the Main House to the Stable Yard had no visible reference to its historic use as workspaces and became ornamental lawn areas with specimen trees. The

Callons also planted azaleas, roses, and other ornamental plants as part of a new planting plan developed by landscape architect William Garbo to support the new use of the property.

#### NPS PERIOD/EXISTING CONDITIONS

Currently, the NPS operates the former estate as a house museum open to the public. Melrose occupies 78.68 acres of land, down from its historic size of 132 acres during the McMurren period. Two modern residential subdivisions, Roselawn Homes and Roselawn Terrace, occupy the land beyond the north boundary of Melrose, along the historic approach road from Natchez. McLaurin Elementary school occupies the land beyond Spanish Bayou, which forms the eastern boundary of Melrose. A railroad embankment forms the south boundary of the property. The Kellys conveyed the easement for the railroad to the Natchez and Eastern Railroad in 1913. The Melrose-Montebello Parkway forms the western boundary of the property. The City of Natchez acquired the right-of-way to construct the road in 1972.

One of the consequences of NPS ownership and management of the property is that people no longer live on the property. The landscape components associated with daily meals - the kitchen, dairy, vegetable garden, orchard, and poultry yards are no longer represented to the public in their original forms. According to the CLR, these activities and elements would have been, "a vital and very animated part of any nineteenth century property and were apparently quite important to the household throughout most of the Kellys' twentieth century ownership as well" (CLR 1996: 148). The CLR also points out that the end of farming activities at Melrose had a similar deadening effect of the landscape. The seasonal rhythms of plowing, seeding, haying and harvesting the fields are absent and replaced by large expanses of grasslands, which offer little seasonal change. The Orchard does not produce fruit, cows and other livestock no longer graze the fields, and no agriculture takes place any longer. Instead, the landscape of Melrose reads mostly as an ornamental landscape consisting of mown grass and specimen trees and shrubs.

Another consequence of NPS ownership is the development of a maintenance complex on the south end of the property. The NPS added multiple buildings and a parking area to facilitate maintenance and use of the site, shortly after acquiring the property in the 1990s. These buildings are located in former agricultural fields, away from high visitation areas and out of view of most visitors. While maintenance of Melrose has been ongoing and necessary since the creation of the estate, this modern complex illustrates a change in maintenance practices over time from manual labor to mechanical means. The addition of gas-powered mowing, trimming, and other modern maintenance equipment combined with the buildings necessary to house and shelter staff that operate the equipment is a marked change in land use from the McMurren and Kelly periods of significance.

The NPS use of the property to exhibit antebellum life to visitors through the preservation of the house and grounds continues an important historic use of the site established by the Kellys when they opened Melrose to the public as part of the Natchez Pilgrimage between 1932 and 1974. The use of the estate during the McMurren period as a place to showcase the incredible wealth of an elite planter family and their status in antebellum society also continues today.

### **Topography**

The current topography is similar in character and appearance to its historic condition in both periods of significance. The topography of Melrose is a result of its highly erodible Loess soils. The erosion of Loess soil often results in steep walled gullies. In a number of locations along the Spanish Bayou the banks are ten to 20 feet tall. Otherwise, the topography of Melrose remains rolling hills. The Main House occupies the highest elevation of the property. Buildings and agricultural fields occupy the most level ground on the property. Woods occupy the steeper terrain. In the Front Field, a slight ridge is visible along the center of the field. Known as a level spreader, this ridge is a nineteenth-century erosion control device that helped spread the flow of water across the field. It appears in a panoramic photograph from the early 20th century and likely dates from the McMurren period or possibly earlier. It remains in good condition lending integrity to both significant historic periods.

#### **Character-defining Features:**

Feature:	Level Spreader
Feature Identification Number:	164857
Type of Feature Contribution:	Contributing
Feature:	Natural Topography
Feature Identification Number:	164859
Type of Feature Contribution:	Contributing
Feature:	Slope of Front Lawn
Feature Identification Number:	164861
Type of Feature Contribution:	Contributing
Feature:	Slope of Flower Garden
Feature Identification Number:	164863
Type of Feature Contribution:	Contributing
Feature:	Slope of Orchard
Feature Identification Number:	164865
Type of Feature Contribution:	Contributing
Feature:	Slope of Back Yard
Feature Identification Number:	164867
Type of Feature Contribution:	Contributing



## Vegetation

Vegetation is perhaps the most complicated landscape characteristic to document at Melrose. The Kelly family took a series of panoramic photographs of Melrose and commissioned two surveys of the estate between 1903-1908. These panoramas and surveys provide the most complete documentation of both the mature McMurren landscape and the early Kelly period landscape at the estate. During the production of the CLR, consultants took photographs from the same viewpoints in 1995 and 1996. The Jaeger Company reshot the images in 2011 for use in evaluating the vegetation at the site. These photos are included as an Appendix to the CLI and referenced throughout this section of the document.

### MCMURREN PERIOD

Panoramic photographs from the early twentieth century record the trees and shrubs growing on the estate at that time. The age and structure of the vegetation seen in the photos reinforces the claim that the landscape seen in the early 1900s is essentially the same one created by the McMurrens in the 1840s and 1850s (CLR 1996: 105). The panoramas show mature trees, with wide-spreading canopies, growing in the Flower Garden, near the Main House, along the serpentine entrance drive, and in the Stable Yard. Unfortunately, the photos fail to capture significant areas of the landscape including the Orchard and Vegetable Garden. The Cultural Landscape Report examined family correspondence and concluded that the plant material included popular plants from the period. The McMurrens planted trees, shrubs, bulbs, and herbaceous perennials that experience showed would perform well in the humid Mississippi climate. The McMurrens also used native species, including cherry laurel (*Prunus caroliniana*), which they likely dug and transplanted from the local woods. The photographs show that the grounds had lost some of the ornamental plantings referred to in the McMurren family correspondence, notably roses, which are not visible in any of the panoramas.

The following vegetation features from the McMurren period exist in the Melrose landscape today:

#### Pine Trees in Front Lawn (Graphic 34):

Two clusters of mature pine trees appear in panoramic photograph NATC #164. These trees, which frame the view from the house towards the Front Field, were an important part of the picturesque landscape entry sequence established during the McMurren period and preserved by the Kellys. The pines also frame the views in and out Front Lawn. The original pines were likely Loblolly pines (*Pinus taeda*). The NPS has replanted the northern cluster of trees to replace original trees that died. The existing southern grouping of pines consists of mature trees; however, they are not the originals visible in the historic panorama. The discrepancy in the age of the two groups of pine trees results in a different character today than during the historic periods, when both the north and south clusters were the same approximate age and size.

#### Cherry Laurel Allée from the Courtyard to the Vegetable Garden (Graphic 35):

This allée appears in an early 1900s photograph of Jane Johnson, as well as on the 1908 Babbit survey (Graphic 13, Graphic 21). In the photograph, the allée is mature, dating it the McMurren

period. The Kellys replanted this hedge and the Callons later removed it. The NPS replanted the hedge in the early 2000s, after installing a universally accessible concrete walk to the former Vegetable Garden (now parking lot). The current allée remains in good condition, although the NPS maintains it at much lower height than it appeared during both historic periods. As a result, the allée reads more like two hedges than it does an allée.

Cherry Laurel Hedges along the Entrance Drive (Graphic 36):

Two hedges protrude out into the Front Lawn of Melrose from the front steps of Melrose in both the historic panoramic photos and the 1908 Babbit Survey. These two sections of hedge define the eastern boundary of the Front Lawn and follow the route of the original entrance drive creating an arc of vegetation extending from the front steps of the Main House. The panoramic photos show the hedge in a state of disrepair at the turn of the century, with missing and overgrown sections. The Kellys replanted the hedge as part of their rehabilitation of the grounds, the Callons removed it in the 1970s-1980s, and the NPS restored it in the 2000s. Today the restored hedge is in good condition and helps to define the spatial organization and character present during both historic periods. NPS staff maintains the hedge at approximately the same height as it appears in the early 1900s photographs of the site.

Cherry Laurel Hedges associated with the Orchard (Graphic 37):

A series of hedges defined the spatial organization of the Orchard during the McMurran period. The Babbit survey and the panoramic photos both clearly illustrate the hedges and their locations. The Kellys replanted and maintained these hedges during their occupancy. The Callons removed these hedges in the 1970s-1980s, replacing a short section separating the Orchard from the Flower Garden with a camellia hedge. The NPS removed the camellia hedge and replanted all of the hedges associated with the Orchard using cherry laurel, restoring the spatial organization of the Orchard and to a lesser extent, the Flower Garden. Today, the hedge appears much shorter than it did in early 1900s photographs of the site. In the historic photos, the hedge is nearly level with the roofline of the Main House Privy (see Appendix A: Melrose Panoramas), while today it is approximately half as tall.

Cherry Laurel Hedge associated with the Historic Vegetable Garden (Graphic 38):

A cherry laurel hedge existed along a section of original circulation leading from the front of the Main House to the Carriage House. This hedge helped to define the southern boundary of the historic Vegetable Garden that now functions as the visitor parking area. This hedge aided in demarking the boundary of the inner and outer zones of the property during both historic periods. The Callons removed this hedge during their time at Melrose in the 1970s-1980s. The NPS restored a portion of this hedge following a treatment recommendation in the 1996 CLR; however, they failed to replant the entire hedge. The NPS also keeps the hedge closely trimmed today. Historically, this hedge was left untrimmed (CLR 1996: 170).

Cherry Laurel Hedge in Courtyard (Graphic 39):

A cherry laurel hedge is visible in the early 1900s photos of the Courtyard. This hedge defined the walk between the Dairy and the Main House Privy during the McMurran period. The

Kellys restored this hedge during their occupancy. Like the other cherry laurel hedges at Melrose, the Callons removed this hedge while they lived at the estate in order to simplify maintenance. The NPS restored this hedge in the early 2000s. The hedge is in good condition today, although clipped at a lower height than during the historic periods resulting in a slightly different character.

Camellias in Front Lawn (Graphic 40):

Three camellias (*Camellia japonica*) grew along the Entrance Road in the Front Lawn near the front entrance to the Main House at the turn of the century. These date from the nineteenth century McMurren landscape, as they are mature in panoramic photograph NATC #164. Two survive today, though both are in decline. The CLR recommends taking cuttings from the surviving camellias for use in replanting the missing shrub to ensure preservation of the original type. It may be advisable to replant all three camellias simultaneously in order to retain the original character of the ornamental shrubs in the Front Lawn.

Magnolia in Yard North of Main House (Graphic 41):

A large Southern magnolia (*Magnolia grandiflora*) appears next to the northwest corner of the Main House in panoramic photograph NATC #166. Mary McMurren refers to this tree in a letter in 1856. A magnolia exists in this location today. Whether it is the original tree or a replacement planted by the Kellys remains unknown. Either way, the tree is in good condition today, contributing to both periods of significance.

Specimen Trees in Front Lawn (Graphic 42):

The NPS has replanted several hardwood trees in the Front Lawn in the approximate location of trees that appear in panoramic photograph NATC #164. These trees were mature at the beginning of the twentieth century as evidenced by their size in the historic photo, dating them to the McMurren period. The trees consist of two large tulip poplars (*Liriodendron tulipifera*) in the right center of the photograph and two large oaks (*Quercus* spp.) in the left center, as well as four evergreen trees along the northern portion of the Entrance Drive. Arranged for picturesque effect and located prominently in front of the Main House, these trees are important features in the landscape. The four hardwoods persisted through the Kelly period. All four died of old age by the 2000s and the NPS replanted three of them in 2010. The newly planted tulip poplar closest to the front steps of the Main House died in 2011. The newly planted tulip poplar in the middle of the Front Lawn is thriving. For some unknown reason the NPS only replanted one of the oak trees, omitting the other. The single replanted oak is in good condition. The four evergreen trees also date to the McMurren period and remained during the Kelly period before succumbing to old age. The NPS replanted three of these trees with pine trees (*Pinus taeda*) and a fourth with a flowering dogwood (*Cornus florida*). The trees visible in photograph NATC #164 appear to be red cedars, not pine trees, though it is difficult to be certain. The NPS replanted all of the specimen trees in the front lawn based on specific treatment recommendations from the CLR (CLR 1996: 166).

Group of Pines Trees north of the Vegetable Garden (Graphic 43):

Groups of loblolly pines are visible in two panoramas, NATC #168 and #182 surrounding the northern fence line of the Vegetable Garden. The NPS replanted pines here recently, helping to define the historic spatial organization of this area, which now functions as a parking lot.

Tea Olive at the Southwestern Corner of the Main House (Graphic 44):

A mature tea olive (*Osmanthus fragrans*) is visible in panoramic photograph NATC #180, likely dating this ornamental shrub to the McMurren period. The same shrub exists here today in good condition.

Live Oak in Flower Garden (Graphic 45):

At least one of the large live oaks (*Quercus virginiana*) currently in the Flower Garden appears as a mature tree in panoramic photograph NATC #169. This tree dates to the nineteenth century and appears to be in good condition.

Specimen Trees in Back Yard (Graphic 46):

Several large specimen trees appear in panoramic photograph NATC #171; and at least three large oak trees and a northern catalpa (*Catalpa speciosa*) currently growing in the Back Yard northeast of the Smokehouse appear to be the ones visible in the historic image, dating the existing trees to the nineteenth century. The trees appear healthy and in good condition today.

Specimen Trees in Stable Yard (Graphic 47):

The NPS replanted several hardwood trees in the Stable Yard. Several appear to be in the approximate location of trees that appear mature in panoramic photograph NATC #165. The original trees date to the nineteenth century McMurren landscape.

#### DAVIS-KELLY PERIOD

It is impossible to judge how much vegetation changed, lost or was added during this period because the documentation is incomplete (CLR 1996: 105). It is not possible to separate the contributions of the McMurrans from that of the Davis-Kelly family to the evolution of the landscape. In general, it is proposed that the McMurrans played a larger role at Melrose than the Davis-Kellys (CLR 1996:105).

#### KELLY PERIOD

In addition to the mature McMurren landscape, the turn of the century panoramic photographs show recently planted trees, put out by the Kelly family as part of their rehabilitation of the grounds. Panoramas show more-recently planted trees beside the entrance drive near the cypress pond and near the gate to the Front Lawn. At the gate to the Front Lawn, a southern magnolia is visible in panoramic photograph #167. This tree persists in the landscape today.

The Kellys replanted the ornamental grounds, trying to recreate their nineteenth century layout. The Kellys replanted all of the cherry laurel hedges associated with the inner zone of the property during the McMurren period. The Kellys replanted the cherry laurel hedges along the entrance road and added nandinas next to the front step. They added large groups of azaleas

around the front lawn and across the grounds of the estate late in their occupation of Melrose.

The planting program in the Flower Garden was even more extensive and followed the directions of two elderly caretakers of the place, Alice Sims and Jane Johnson. They kept many of the old trees and shrubs and added many more ornamental plants, including camellias, crape myrtles, roses, hydrangeas, spireas, gardenias, and azaleas. They reestablished turf paths in the garden, defining them with rows of jonquils instead of the original boxwoods. They edged the flowerbeds in the parterre garden feature with liriopé and boxwood and filled them with bulbs, annuals, perennials, and rosebushes. The Kellys also planted crape myrtles along the south side of the cherry laurel hedge that defined the entrance drive and the northern boundary of the Flower Garden. These trees are visible in panoramic photograph NATC #163 in a recently planted state. These trees remain in the landscape today.

The north side of the house featured grass, trees, and a few flowering shrubs. Mrs. Kelly planted a water oak and live oak in the Courtyard in early 1900s to shade the area. These trees matured and became character-defining features of the Kelly period Courtyard landscape. According to family tradition, Mrs. Kelly intended for both of the trees to be live oaks, and mistook the much shorter-lived water oak (*Quercus nigra*) for a live oak at the time of planting. The Callons removed the water oak shortly after acquiring the property as it was in decline. The live oak remains a mature specimen in the Courtyard today. The Kellys replanted the McMurren period cherry laurel allée from the Kitchen to the Vegetable Garden. The Kellys maintained the Vegetable Garden in its original location. The Kellys also kept the Orchard planted in a variety of tree fruits, including peach (*Prunus persica*), pear (*Pyrus* spp.), wild plum (*Prunus americana*), and figs (*Ficus carica*). Mrs. Kelly reportedly planted tung-oil trees (*Aleurites fordii*) in the orchard for their flower and also allowed trees to grow up along the many fencerows that defined the estate during their tenure of the property. Some of these fencerow remnants remain in the landscape.

**Courtyard Live Oak (Graphic 48):**

Mrs. Kelly planted what she thought were two live oaks in the Courtyard of Melrose in the early twentieth century to provide shade. One of the trees turned out to be a much shorter-lived water oak. When the Callons purchased the property, the water oak was in decline and removed. The live oak remains in the landscape in good condition today, contributing to the Kelly period of significance.

**Crape Myrtles along the Entrance Drive (Graphic 49):**

The Kellys also planted crape myrtles (*Lagerstroemia indica*) along the south side of the cherry laurel hedge that defined the entrance drive and the northern boundary of the Flower Garden. These trees are visible in panoramic photograph NATC #163 in a recently planted state. These trees remain in the landscape today.

**Magnolia at Entrance Road Gate to Front Yard (Graphic 50):**

A historic southern magnolia currently growing in this location appears in panoramic photograph

NATC #167. The historic panorama shows this tree in a recently planted state, suggesting that the Kellys planted it. The original tree remains in good condition.

Fencerow Trees (Graphic 51):

Several large hardwood trees grow in a line in an east/west direction near the Collection Storage Building. This line of trees marks the location of a historic fence line.

CALLON PERIOD

The Callons generally simplified the landscape during their ownership in an effort to reduce the amount of labor required to maintain the estate. They removed nearly all of the hedges within the inner zone of the property that formerly subdivided the ornamental landscape. They added large masses of azaleas in locations, including several along a new loop drive crossing the western edge of the front lawn. They replaced the nandinas next to the front porch with azaleas. They abandoned the path network in the Flower Garden and allowed the Orchard to decline. By contrast, the north side of the house, where visitors would park and enter the grounds, increased in importance under the Callons. They removed the cherry laurel hedges to create an open lawn space extending from the Front Lawn to the Back Yard. They replaced a section of the cherry laurel hedge around the Orchard with a camellia (*Camelia sasanqua*) hedge. They removed several large trees from near the Main House, including the water oak in the Courtyard and a red oak (*Quercus rubra*) north of the Kitchen. They planted roses and azaleas in newly developed beds around the dependencies.

NPS PERIOD/EXISTING CONDITIONS

Several of the large canopy trees, mostly oak species and southern magnolias, currently growing around the Main House appear in the panoramic photographs. Some of the existing vegetation replaces documented historic vegetation. Two stands of large pine trees appear in the panoramas framing views between the Front Field and the Front Lawn. These stands of evergreens are a key part of the picturesque entry sequence designed during the McMurran period. The current pines are not the originals, though they are in the approximate original locations. There are mature trees and shrubs in the Flower Garden, creating the feeling of a historic garden. Several of the trees date from the nineteenth century and appear in the panoramic photographs. Many of the ornamental shrubs are very mature and likely date to the early twentieth century. These include historic camellias, azaleas, tea olives, and crape myrtles. The NPS has also reestablished cherry laurel hedges around the house. New hedges include the one between the Flower Garden and the Orchard, between the Orchard and the Back Yard, and the hedge from the Courtyard to the Vegetable Garden (currently the visitor parking lot). The NPS has allowed the Orchard to continue to decline and there are not enough trees remaining to convey the sense of an Orchard in the space. The NPS has planted dozens of native trees along the northern edge of the property and along the south side of the large pond in an effort to screen views to adjacent neighborhoods. The lawn area around the house is St. Augustine Grass (*Stenotaphrum secundatum*). The field areas feature a mixture of grass and forbs, including St. Augustine, Bermuda (*Cyniopsis dactylon*), foxtail millet (*Setaria italica*), crabgrass (*Digitaria ischaemum*), nutsedge (*Cyperus esculentus*), and lespedeza (*Lespedeza*

cuneata).

The woodland areas around the perimeter of the estate include a mixture of very large, mature hardwood trees and a diversity of young trees, including both exotic and native species. The very large trees often appear to be in a row and are in the correct location to be associated with a historic fence line. The younger species are typical of a young, successional forest in this region. The woods have various oak species, American beech (*Fagus grandifolia*), and maples (*Acer* spp.). There are invasive exotics throughout a large portion of the wooded areas. These include kudzu (*Pueraria lobata*), English ivy (*Hedera helix*), Japanese honeysuckle (*Lonicera japonica*), privet (*Ligustrum sinense*), and Chinese tallow tree (*Triadica sebifera*).

**Character-defining Features:**

Feature:	Pine Trees in Front Lawn
Feature Identification Number:	164897
Type of Feature Contribution:	Contributing
Feature:	Cherry Laurel Allée from the Courtyard
Feature Identification Number:	164899
Type of Feature Contribution:	Contributing
Feature:	Cherry Laurel Hedges/Entrance Drive
Feature Identification Number:	164901
Type of Feature Contribution:	Contributing
Feature:	Orchard Cherry Laurel Hedges
Feature Identification Number:	164903
Type of Feature Contribution:	Contributing
Feature:	Vegetable Garden Cherry Laurel Hedge
Feature Identification Number:	164905
Type of Feature Contribution:	Contributing
Feature:	Courtyard Hedges
Feature Identification Number:	164907
Type of Feature Contribution:	Contributing
Feature:	Camellias in Front Lawn
Feature Identification Number:	164909

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Magnolia in Yard North of Main House

Feature Identification Number: 164911

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Specimen Trees in Front Lawn

Feature Identification Number: 164913

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Group of Pines Trees N. of Veg Garden

Feature Identification Number: 164915

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Tea Olive SW corner of Main House

Feature Identification Number: 164917

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Live Oak in Flower Garden

Feature Identification Number: 164919

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Specimen Trees in Back Yard

Feature Identification Number: 164921

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Specimen Trees in Stable Yard

Feature Identification Number: 164923

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Courtyard Live Oak

Feature Identification Number: 164925

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Entrance Drive Crape Myrtles

Feature Identification Number: 164927

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing



Feature: Magnolia at Entrance Road Gate

Feature Identification Number: 164929

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Fencerow Trees

Feature Identification Number: 164931

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Orchard Trees in Decline

Feature Identification Number: 164933

Type of Feature Contribution: Non contributing – compatible

Feature: Recently Planted Trees

Feature Identification Number: 164935

Type of Feature Contribution: Non contributing – compatible

Feature: Invasive Exotic Vegetation

Feature Identification Number: 164937

Type of Feature Contribution: Non contributing – compatible

Feature: Callon Remnant Ornamental Plantings

Feature Identification Number: 164939

Type of Feature Contribution: Non contributing – compatible

**Landscape Characteristic Graphics:**



*Cherry laurel hedge*







*Live oak*

### **Constructed Water Features**

Three ponds appear on the 1908 Babbit survey map. The largest pond on the map is north of the Vegetable Garden. The McMurren family correspondence referred to this feature as the “lake.” The Kellys called the pond next to the entrance drive the “Cypress Pond,” because of the trees growing around its edges. It appears to have been a design feature constructed at the same time as the entrance drive as part of the entrance sequence. The entrance road turns away from the pond, providing a reason for the curvilinear route to the house. The third pond on the 1908 map is a dammed gully on the south side of the property near the railroad embankment. Several dams crossed gullies to prevent further erosion of the fine-grained soil. These dams may have created temporary ponds but they did not serve an ornamental purpose like the main pond and the cypress pond.

The Kellys constructed a much larger pond, abandoning the old pond north of the Vegetable Garden. Sometime prior to 1920, they constructed a new dam across the bayou. This dam washed out in the 1950s. They constructed a second, smaller pond on the edge of the woods south of the dam for watering livestock. The Kellys apparently improved the dams on the gullies in the 1920s or 1930s for erosion control. A small pond south of the Orchard may have served to water the livestock of farmers renting fields from the Kellys. The small pond that appears near the railroad embankment on the 1908 map was gone by the 1940s. The Cypress

Pond remained through the Kelly period and exists in the landscape today.

The Callons rebuilt the large pond built by the Kellys on the north side of the property. They constructed a new dam in the approximate location of the Kellys' dam that failed in the 1950s. The Callon pond is larger than the Kelly pond, with steeper side slopes. The Callons pumped water from wells on the property to maintain the water level. The cypress pond remained unaltered during the Callon period. All of the other ponds were lost during this period.

**Large Pond (Graphic 100):**

The Callon family enlarged a Kelly period pond to create the current large pond. The pond is 2.9 acres in area. The Callons formed an earthen dam across an intermittent tributary of Spanish Bayou to form the pond. The Callons kept the water level consistent by pumping well water into the pond. The NPS discontinued this practice and now the pond level fluctuates depending on precipitation. A standing outflow pipe passes water out of the pond when the water levels exceed the level of the pipe. The pond is in good condition with diminished integrity due to the Callon period expansion.

**Cypress Pond (Graphic 101):**

The Cypress Pond is a nineteenth century landscape feature and part of the picturesque aesthetic that makes Melrose landscape historically significant. It is located near the entrance into the property at the northwest corner of the estate. It is approximately 0.15 acres and surrounded by bald cypress trees. The pond is in good condition and retains integrity for both the McMurran and Kelly periods.

**Character-defining Features:**

Feature:	Large Pond
Feature Identification Number:	164893
Type of Feature Contribution:	Contributing
Feature:	Cypress Pond
Feature Identification Number:	164895
Type of Feature Contribution:	Contributing

**Landscape Characteristic Graphics:**



*Graphic 101: Cypress Pond, NATC Archives*





*Graphic 100: Large Pond (NATC Archives)*

## **Circulation**

### **MCMURRAN PERIOD**

The 1908 Babbit survey maps the main roads on the estate, many of which presumably date to the McMurren period. The entrance road traveled on a curvilinear route to the house from the northwest corner of the property where the road from Natchez ended. The entrance road passed through a formal gate on the way to the house. This gate marked the dividing line between the inner and outer zones of the property. Inside the gate, the entrance road branched, with the northern route leading towards the Stable Yard and Courtyard behind the house. The main entrance road passed the front entrance to the Main House and ended in a loop that allowed horse-drawn carriages to reverse direction and go to the Stable Yard. A network of fences completely enclosed the inner zone. The 1908 map shows six gates providing passage from the inner to outer zones. The Cultural Landscape Report deciphers surveyor's notes from 1903 and deduces the location of several secondary roads not shown on the 1908 map. These roads included one that branched off from the entrance road loop and led to the fields and

woods southwest of the Flower Garden. Another set of roads existed in the field east of the orchard. These roads would have facilitated movement between the outer fields that encircle the inner zone. Historic photographs from the early twentieth century show that the roads were paved with gravel and walkways were paved with brick.

The following circulation features from the McMurren landscape remain at Melrose today:

**Entrance Drive (Graphic 52):**

The entrance drive is the historic circulation route into the property from the entrance, at its northwest corner, to the Main House. It appears on the 1908 Babbitt survey of Melrose and appears to be an original feature of the estate dating to the McMurren/antebellum period. Its curvilinear geometry is characteristic of the picturesque landscape tradition seen in the Melrose historic landscape. The road enters the property through entrance gates moved in the 1970s as part of the construction of the Melrose-Montebello Parkway. During both the McMurren and Kelly periods, the entrance road passed the front of the Main House and ended in a loop that allowed horse drawn carriages to reverse course and travel to the Carriage House and Stable. Current vehicular traffic follows the historic entrance drive about half its original length before branching off onto a historic farm road added in the Kelly period. Currently, grass overgrows a short section of the original entrance drive leading to the Main House making its course difficult to perceive. Grass also overgrows the original loop turnaround that served as the terminus of the entrance drive, diminishing the integrity of this historic circulation feature.

**Side Road North of Main House (Graphic 53):**

Just inside the gate between the Front Field and the Front Lawn, this side road branches off from the Entrance Road. The side road north of the Main House was part of the original circulation system seen on the 1908 Babbitt survey that likely dates from the McMurren period. It was the route connecting the entrance road to the Stable Yard by the Kellys. The Callons used this piece of circulation to access a new family parking area built near the Smokehouse. The NPS uses the road for maintenance.

**DAVIS-KELLY PERIOD**

The circulation of Melrose during this period is undocumented. It is likely that the routes established by the McMurrens continued during this time and that the circulation system visible on the 1908 Babbitt survey is reflective of this period.

**KELLY PERIOD:**

The CLR concludes that the Kellys made minor adjustments to the nineteenth-century circulation system. The entrance road remained on its original alignment from the front entrance gate. The road to the Stable Yard was in same location. The Kellys abandoned a short section of road between the house and the road to the Stable Yard. In 1908, they added a drive to the Dairy, which they converted to a garage. This new section connected to the tear-shaped entrance drive. The Kellys added a series of outer roads that allowed people who rented land on the estate access to their fields without having to enter into the inner zone, including a road



that branched off from the entrance road approximately 200 yards before the gate to the front lawn. This new road travelled north of the Vegetable Garden, past the Stable Yard, and through the fields extending to the far, southwest, corner of the property. The roads during the Kelly period also had gates. The gates into the inner zone were particularly ornamental-- white wooden palings with a sag curve on the top. The outer, farm roads had utilitarian, iron bar gates suspended between cedar posts.

The following circulation features from the Kelly landscape remain at Melrose today:

**Vehicular Path to Dairy:**

George Kelly installed a short section of road from the entrance drive to the Dairy, where he had a garage. The Callons removed this drive and it is barely visible as of 2011. It is very different in character from the other circulation routes at Melrose lacking the curvilinear alignment of the historic roads. This missing road is considered a non-contributing resource.

**Grass Paths in Flower Garden:**

Turf lanes between hedges formed the circulation route through the Flower Garden during the Kelly period. The Kellys reestablished this informal network of paths through the garden in the early twentieth century. Mrs. Kelly lined the paths with flowering bulbs rather than the boxwoods that reportedly lined them during the McMurran-Davis periods. The Callons abandoned the path network in the 1970s and they are not perceptible in the landscape today. There is potential to reestablish these paths to lend integrity to the Kelly period of significance.

**Brick Path in Courtyard between Kitchen and Smokehouse (Graphic 54):**

A brick herringbone path with a brick edge leads from the Kitchen to the Smokehouse in the Melrose Courtyard. The walkway has a discernible crown, commonly called "turtleback." It appears in historic panoramic photographs of the Courtyard taken by the Kellys. According to Park staff, the Kellys added this walkway to the Melrose grounds after their home at Concord burned down in 1901. This contributing resource is in fair condition.

**Road Remnants in Woods East of Servants' Barn (Graphic 55):**

An abandoned section of road, part of the Kelly farm road network installed in the mid-twentieth century, is visible in woods behind the Servant's Barn. The road passes over a culvert with concrete headwall that allowed surface water to drain towards Spanish Bayou. There is another abandoned section of road near the collection storage building visible in the turf. These remnants are likely part of the Kelly system of farm roads that the Callons and the NPS modified during the contemporary period.

**Walking Path between Visitor Center/Kitchen and Offices in Slave Cabin (Graphic 56):**

A narrow dirt path connects the Courtyard and the Stable Yard area. This path is in the approximate location of a dirt path visible in historic photographs of the area. Both paths reflect the shortest distance between the Slave Cabins and the Courtyard. This type of informal circulation lends integrity to both the Kelly and McMurran periods.

CALLON PERIOD:

The Callons made significant changes to the circulation system after they purchased the property in 1976. They rebuilt the entrance gate after it was moved during the construction of the Melrose-Montebello Parkway. The Callons tried to provide a route for visitors to tour the house and grounds. They converted the Kelly period farm road that branched off from the entrance road into the main circulation route for visitors. This road led to a parking lot the family constructed on the site of the former Vegetable Garden. The Callons also developed a new road that made a loop around the front yard approximately following the route of the curving fence that originally separated the Front Lawn from the Front Field. They abandoned the historic road north of the house that connected the entrance road back to the Stable Yard. They also abandoned loop turnaround at the terminus of the entrance road in front of the Main House, allowing grass to overgrow it. The Callons also constructed a new road from the Stable Yard to the southwest corner of the property, where the railroad met the Melrose-Montebello Parkway. This road used sections of historic roads but took a more direct path.

The following circulation features from the Callon landscape remain at Melrose today:

Concrete Parking Pad at Main House (Graphic 57):

The Callons installed a concrete parking area in front of the Main House, adjacent to the front steps. They also relocated a historic mounting block, moving it to the far, western edge of this concrete pad. This contemporary feature is non-contributing and in good condition.

Drive across Front Lawn (Graphic 58):

The Callons installed this road in the 1970s to serve as an entrance road and to provide visitors with views of the front of the Main House. Its alignment follows the historic location of a fence, now missing, that separated the Front Lawn and Front Field. This non-contributing feature remains in good condition.

Brick Path in Courtyard between Dairy and Main House (Graphic 59):

The Callons rebuilt this walkway during their improvements to the property in the late 1970s. The Kellys installed the first walkway here in the first half of the twentieth century after converting the Dairy to a garage. It has a herringbone pattern with running course brick edges. It is flush with grade and its surface is flat. It is in good condition and non-contributing.

Gravel/Dirt Parking Lot at Historic Vegetable Garden (Graphic 60):

The Callon family converted the historic Vegetable Garden into as parking lot to serve tourists visiting Melrose. This gravel lot continues to serve as the main visitor parking area for the site.

Gravel/Dirt "Family" Parking Lot (Graphic 61):

The Callon family installed this parking area behind the Kitchen for visitors and for family members. It became the main parking lot during their period of occupation. Its surface is loose brown gravel.

Farm Road (Graphic 62):

This dirt road begins in the Stable Yard, passes the Servant Barn and Collection Storage Building, and ends at entrance into the Maintenance complex near the intersection of the railroad and Melrose-Montebello Parkway. The Callons installed this road, reusing sections of road dating from the Kelly period. The NPS straightened the section between the Collection Storage building and the Maintenance complex and continues to use this road today for maintenance of the estate.

Service Road (Graphic 63):

A dirt road dating from the Callon period provides access to a pump house north of the large pond. The NPS maintains this non-contributing road to access the north property line.

NPS PERIOD/EXISTING CONDITIONS

Today, the NPS maintains a circulation system that resembles the circulation during the Callon period. They have reestablished the original antebellum road north of the house, connecting the Entrance Road to the Stable Yard. Two important sections of the historic entrance road near the front of the Main House grassed over by the Callons remain grass today. The NPS has also further straightened the road leading to the Maintenance area that the Callons built, modifying a Kelly period road system in the area. The NPS added or reconstructed multiple brick paths in the Courtyard to facilitate universal access to the site as well as providing new circulation associated with the maintenance complex they constructed.

Reinforced Turf Path (Graphic 64):

The NPS installed a soil-stabilized path, constructed of an interlocking cellular paving grid filled with turf, south of the Main House. The turf and this feature are in poor condition.

Courtyard Brick Stepping Stones (Graphic 65):

A series of small bricks provide access to the rear of the privy. They do not appear to be historic.

Brick Path across Courtyard between Kitchen and Dairy (Graphic 66):

The NPS constructed the current herringbone brick walkway across the Courtyard between Kitchen and Dairy. This walkway existed in the historic period and appears in several panoramic photographs from the early twentieth century. The Callons removed the original walkway during their tenure at the site. The current walkway remains in good condition.

Brick Path in Courtyard between Dairy and Privy (Graphic 67):

The NPS constructed this herringbone walkway in the approximate location of a historic walkway between the back of the main house and this outbuilding. This walkway lacks the historic “turtleback” character of the original walkways, for safety and universal access reasons. It is in good condition.

Concrete Path between Parking Lot and Courtyard (Graphic 68):

The NPS constructed this walkway in the 1990s. The route follows a historic dirt path in this location that connected the Kitchen to the Vegetable Garden. It is in good condition.

Accessible Parking Area (Graphic 69):

The NPS installed this concrete pad during the construction of the walkway between the parking lot and Courtyard. It is in good condition.

Reinforced Turf at Carriage House (Graphic 70):

The NPS has installed reinforced turf in front of the Carriage House. It is visible in the turf and in fair condition.

RV Parking Area (Graphic 71):

The NPS installed two concrete parking pads for the recreational vehicles of park volunteers. Two gravel driveways access each pad. These pads are in good condition.

Gravel Road to Maintenance Storage Barn (Graphic 72):

The NPS installed a gravel road to provide, interior circulation around the Maintenance storage yard. The road appears to be in good condition.

Asphalt Maintenance Road (Graphic 73):

The NPS paved with asphalt the section of road that passes through the Maintenance complex. It occupies a section of a Callon period road. This contemporary road is in good condition.

**Character-defining Features:**

Feature: Entrance Drive

Feature Identification Number: 164941

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Side Road North of House

Feature Identification Number: 164943

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Vehicular Path to Dairy

Feature Identification Number: 164945

Type of Feature Contribution: Non contributing – compatible

Feature: Grass Paths in Flower Garden

Feature Identification Number: 164947

Type of Feature Contribution: Non contributing – compatible

Melrose Estate  
Natchez National Historical Park

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Feature:	Brick Path
Feature Identification Number:	164949
Type of Feature Contribution:	Contributing
Feature:	Road Remnants
Feature Identification Number:	164951
Type of Feature Contribution:	Undetermined
Feature:	Walking Path between VC and Office
Feature Identification Number:	164953
Type of Feature Contribution:	Undetermined
Feature:	Main House Concrete Parking Pad
Feature Identification Number:	164955
Type of Feature Contribution:	Non contributing – compatible
Feature:	Drive across Front Lawn
Feature Identification Number:	164957
Type of Feature Contribution:	Non contributing – compatible
Feature:	Brick Path in Courtyard between Dairy
Feature Identification Number:	164963
Type of Feature Contribution:	Non contributing – compatible
Feature:	Gravel/Dirt Parking Lot
Feature Identification Number:	164965
Type of Feature Contribution:	Non contributing – compatible
Feature:	Gravel/Dirt “Family” Parking Lot
Feature Identification Number:	164967
Type of Feature Contribution:	Non contributing – compatible
Feature:	Farm Road
Feature Identification Number:	164975
Type of Feature Contribution:	Non contributing – compatible
Feature:	Service Road

Feature Identification Number: 164977  
Type of Feature Contribution: Non contributing – compatible  
Feature: Reinforced Turf Path  
Feature Identification Number: 164979  
Type of Feature Contribution: Non contributing – compatible  
Feature: Courtyard Brick Stepping Stones  
Feature Identification Number: 164981  
Type of Feature Contribution: Undetermined  
Feature: Brick Path across Courtyard  
Feature Identification Number: 164983  
Type of Feature Contribution: Non contributing – compatible  
Feature: Brick Path in Courtyard between Dairy  
Feature Identification Number: 164985  
Type of Feature Contribution: Non contributing – compatible  
Feature: Concrete Path between Parking Lot and Co  
Feature Identification Number: 164987  
Type of Feature Contribution: Non contributing – compatible  
Feature: Accessible Parking Area  
Feature Identification Number: 164989  
Type of Feature Contribution: Non contributing – compatible  
Feature: Reinforced Turf at Carriage House  
Feature Identification Number: 164991  
Type of Feature Contribution: Non contributing – compatible  
Feature: RV Parking Area  
Feature Identification Number: 164993  
Type of Feature Contribution: Non contributing – compatible  
Feature: Gravel Road to Maintenance Storage Barn  
Feature Identification Number: 164995

Type of Feature Contribution: Non contributing – compatible

Feature: Asphalt Maintenance Road

Feature Identification Number: 164997

Type of Feature Contribution: Non contributing – compatible

**Landscape Characteristic Graphics:**



*Melrose Entrance Drive*





*Side Road North of Main House*

### **Small Scale Features**

Small-scale features are small structures and objects in the landscape that serve functional or decorative functions. The small-scale features at Melrose are primarily modern additions to the site to improve visitor services. There is little historical documentation of the small-scale features at Melrose. The panoramic photographs from the early twentieth century capture a landscape around the house filled with the implements of daily life including carts, tools and clotheslines. Fences were common features in the Kelly period landscape. The 1908 Babbit Survey recorded many of the fence locations at that time. Fences separated the outer zone from the inner zone. Fences enclosed several dog pens and a turkey pen near the Back Yard. The panoramic photographs from the early twentieth century show that the Kellys replaced several of the fences during this period, likely because of their decrepit condition. The early fences at the stable yard included post-and-rail fences. The Kellys replaced these with post and wire. While the Kellys changed the material, they kept the historic alignment of the fences. Gates across roads separated the ornamental inner landscape from the agricultural outer

landscape by sequestering livestock. The 1908 Babbit map shows the location of several of these gates. The Callons eliminated all of the fences. They were no longer necessary when the Callons discontinued farming. The NPS has added many small-scale features to the site, including trash cans, picnic tables, and signage to facilitate public use of the property.

The following section describes the individual small-scale features of the site in detail.

Natchez National Historic Park Sign (Graphic 102):

This contemporary sign marks the main entrance to the site. The sign is non-contributing and in good condition.

Main Gate (Graphic 103):

The City of Natchez moved the main gates to the property during the last years of Ethel Kelly's life while constructing the Melrose-Montebello Parkway. The Callons retained and partially reconstructed the gates in their new position near the cypress pond during their ownership of the property. The fixed central and side sections of the Main Gate feature scallops of pickets in a sag curve formation. The two operable wooden gates, which rest on iron hinges, feature the same swag top detailing. While no historic photographic evidence exists of the Main Gates during the McMurren Period, the design of the current gates appears consistent with the gate on the Entrance Drive between the Front Lawn and the Front Field visible in panoramic photo NATC #173 dated c.1905. Both gates feature wood construction, sag curve detailing, and are painted white. The entrance road divides the Main Gates it passes through creating a landscape island planted in Asiatic jasmine ground cover. The gate is in good condition with little historic integrity due to its relocation and partial reconstruction by the Callons.

Melrose Middle Driveway Gate (Graphic 104):

The Callons relocated this Kelly period gate from its original location along the entrance road at the fence between the Front Field and the Front Yard. Its current location is emblematic of the radical change the Callons made to the circulation system by diverting traffic along an outer road to a parking lot. The NPS maintains this general vehicular circulation pattern. The gate remains in good condition and features detailing similar to the Main Gate. This feature has diminished integrity and is considered a non-contributing resource due to its relocation. There is potential for restoring this feature to its original location and restoring integrity.

Ornamental Walking Gates (Graphic 105):

Two wooden Ornamental "Walking Gates" mark the location of paths that existed between areas during the Kelly period. Two of the gates in the back yard lead to paths that no longer exist. A similar gate marks the entrance between the parking lot (former vegetable garden) and the path to the Courtyard. The NPS reconstructed this gate, replacing a historic gate in kind and location. The features are in good condition and lend integrity to the Kelly period of significance.

Orchard Gate (Graphic 106):

Installed by the Kellys in the 1930s, this ornate wrought iron gate serves as the primary entrance into the Orchard, at its northwest corner. The gate originally was at another of the Kellys' Natchez houses, Cherokee. The gate is in good condition and lends integrity to the Kelly period.

Mounting Block (Graphic 107):

Located at the foot of the front steps of the Main House during the early part of the twentieth century, the Callons relocated this feature on the opposite side of the entrance drive during their tenure of the estate, where it stands today. This Kelly period feature is in good condition, but non-contributing due to its location. There is potential to return this item to its original location and restore integrity.

Drain Outlet in Back Yard (Graphic 108):

Historic photographs show a similar outlet for a drain pipe in this area in the early twentieth century. Today there is a small headwall made of brick with a concrete veneer that holds a 3" inch clay pipe. This outlet appears to function and is in good condition.

Metal Wire Edge (Graphic 109):

The NPS has installed a low metal edging material to mark the location of an herbaceous planting bed outlining the historic configuration of the loop drive at the terminus of the entrance drive. This edging protects red lycoris "spider lilies" that mark the original driveway turnaround edge. The edging is in fair condition and non-contributing.

Flower Garden Parterre Urns (Graphic 110):

Green painted urns flank the top of the stairs to flower garden parterre. They feature a fluted urn standing on a six-sided base. Similar urns mark the ends of the parterre walls. One is broken. The NPS removed the broken urn to museum storage. The remaining urns are in good condition. These urns likely date from the early period of the Kelly family occupation of Melrose.

Melrose Tennis Net Posts (Graphic 111):

The Kellys installed a grass tennis court west of the Flower Garden in the first half of the twentieth century. The remaining hardware, related to the tennis court, include the anchor post and dummy post, marking the location of the net. The anchor post has much of its original hardware, including the crank gear and net guide. The NPS stores the original net in the park museum collection. In the 1970s, the Callons removed the back walls of the court and surrounding flowerbeds and benches. The remaining tennis net posts are in good condition and retain integrity.

Gatepost between Flower Garden and South Field (Graphic 112):

A square wooden post with simple capital marks the location of the historic gate installed by the Kellys between the Flower Garden and the South Field. The original cast iron hardware is still present and the feature is in fair condition.

Gatepost between Flower Garden and Front Field (Graphic 113):

A square wooden post with simple capital survives today from the gate installed by the Kellys between the Flower Garden and the Front Field. The original cast iron hardware is still present and the gatepost is in fair condition.

Planters at front steps of the Main House (Graphic 114):

A pair of cast iron planters, in the form of classical urns, appear in the panoramic photographs from the early twentieth century sitting on the wing-walls of the front steps. They are in the same location today, lending integrity to the Kelly period of significance. Both planters are in good condition.

Fence Remnant at Turkey Pen (Graphic 115):

The Kellys installed the turkey pen in this location in the first half of the twentieth century. A short remnant of wire fence is visible nailed to a corner post, near a cedar tree. This contributing feature is in poor condition today.

Fence Remnant near Servant's Barn (Graphic 116):

A section of woven wire fence nailed up between several trees marks the location of a fence line, installed in the first half of the twentieth century by the Kellys, enclosing the area around the Servants Barn. The Kellys' servants including Jane Johnson and Alice Sims used this area for pasturing their own animals. This contributing feature is in poor condition today.

Fence Remnant South of the Flower Garden (Graphic 117):

A single cedar fence post exists on the edge of the woods south of the Flower Garden near the gate that historically led to the south field. Both the fence material still nailed to the post and the post itself are remnants of the fence that separated the Flower Garden from the south agricultural fields. This feature is in poor condition.

Fence Remnant South of the Orchard (Graphic 118):

Remnants of a woven metal wire fence hang on several large trees showing the location of old fence line. There are also several cedar posts visible. The fence goes in two directions. One fence line forms the historic western boundary of the Orchard; the other fence forms the southern boundary of the Orchard. These fences separated the Orchard from the outer fields. The Kellys likely installed this material in the first half of the twentieth century. The fence remnant is in poor condition.

Drainage Structures (Graphic 119):

An iron rectangular culvert drains water under the road, installed by the Callons, in front of the Servants' Barn. This feature is non-contributing and in good condition. A corrugated galvanized metal pipe conveys water from the south side of the outer road, east of Melrose Middle Driveway Gate, to the low ground north of the road, the vicinity of the historic pond. The date of this culvert is unknown. It is in good condition. The NPS installed a third drainage feature at

the northeast corner of the maintenance yard. The pipe outlets into a riprap channel before flowing into Spanish Bayou. This feature is functional and in good condition.

Wooden Bollards (Graphic 120):

Modern wooden bollards made from standard four-by-fours prevent vehicular traffic from leaving the Entrance Road near the cypress pond. Similar bollards extend beyond the entrance gate preventing vehicles from entering the site around the gate. The non-contributing features are in good condition.

HVAC Systems (Graphic 121):

The NPS has installed modern HVAC equipment north of the Main House, north of the Kitchen, and South of the Dairy. The NPS maintains a cherry laurel hedge around the contemporary equipment, as recommended in the 1996 CLR.

Picnic Tables (Graphic 122):

The NPS has installed rounded edge portable ADA picnic tables made by Highland Products on the eastern edge of the parking lot. The NPS also uses a steel tube and pine wood seat table at various locations, including the RV pads at the Maintenance Area.

Benches (Graphic 123):

The NPS uses Highland Product's 6ft Gibraltar Portable Bench with black enamel cast iron frame in many locations across the site, including two in the Flower Garden and one in the Back Yard. These contemporary features are in good condition.

Trash Cans (Graphic 124):

The NPS uses a couple different kinds of trash cans on the site, including a galvanized steel can in the picnic area, a plastic can at Park Offices in the North Slave Cabin, and wood barrel can at the parking area in the parking lot.

Bike Rack (Graphic 125):

The NPS installed a non-historic modern metal bike rack at the parking area. This contemporary feature is in good condition.

Ring Buoy Hangers (Graphic 126):

Four contemporary stainless steel mounts for ring buoys, mounted on 4x4 wood posts, are located around the perimeter of the large pond for safety purposes. These features are in good condition.

Chain Link Fence at Northern Property Line (Graphic 127):

A contemporary chain link fence marks the north property line of Melrose, between the site and the adjacent neighborhood. The fence is in poor condition due to multiple missing sections.

Maintenance Area Fences (Graphic 128):

The NPS installed a chain-link fence around the maintenance storage yard and parking lot in the 1990s. The NPS added this fence during the construction of the maintenance compound buildings. In 2010, the NPS installed a fence between the maintenance field and the railroad tracks. These contemporary fences are non-contributing resources in good condition.

Chain Link Fence around Collection Storage Building (Graphic 129):

The NPS constructed the Collection Storage Building in the 1990s. The fence surrounding the building approximately dates from that same period. It is in good condition.

Metal Pipe at Railroad Crossing (Graphic 130):

Spanish Bayou passes under the railroad through a metal pipe approximately 5 feet in diameter. The pipe is in fair condition and the feature is non-contributing.

Drain Culverts under Entrance Drive and Drive across Front Lawn (Graphic 131):

A concrete headwall has a reinforced metal pipe that drains water from the Front Field, south of the Entrance Drive, and conveys the water under the drive to the north. This feature may date to the later years of the Kelly period of significance.

Wooden Gate at Maintenance Yard Entrance (Graphic 132):

The NPS installed in the 1990s a wooden gate, similar style as gate at the main entrance to Melrose, on large metal piers to mark the entrance into the maintenance area from Melrose-Montebello Parkway. This contemporary feature is in good condition.

Gate between Front Field and Front Lawn (Graphic 133):

This steel gate occupies the approximate original location of the Melrose Middle Driveway Gate. The Callons likely added this gate after relocating the Melrose Middle Driveway Gate. This non-contributing feature is in good condition.

#### **Character-defining Features:**

Feature: Natchez National Historical Park Sign

Feature Identification Number: 166665

Type of Feature Contribution: Non contributing – compatible

Feature: Main Gate

Feature Identification Number: 166667

Type of Feature Contribution: Non contributing – compatible

Feature: Gate between front field and parking area

Feature Identification Number: 166669

Type of Feature Contribution: Non contributing – compatible

Feature: Melrose North Walking Gate

Melrose Estate  
Natchez National Historical Park

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Feature Identification Number: 166671  
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing  
Feature: Melrose East Walking Gate  
Feature Identification Number: 166673  
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing  
Feature: Melrose Northeast Walking Gate  
Feature Identification Number: 166675  
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing  
Feature: Orchard Gate  
Feature Identification Number: 166677  
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing  
Feature: Mounting Block  
Feature Identification Number: 166679  
Type of Feature Contribution: Non contributing – compatible  
Feature: Drain Outlet in back yard  
Feature Identification Number: 166681  
Type of Feature Contribution: Undetermined  
Feature: Metal Wire Edge  
Feature Identification Number: 166683  
Type of Feature Contribution: Non contributing – compatible  
Feature: Flower Garden Parterre Urns  
Feature Identification Number: 166685  
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing  
Feature: Tennis Net Posts  
Feature Identification Number: 166687  
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing  
Feature: Gatepost between the Flower Garden and South Field  
Feature Identification Number: 166689



Type of Feature Contribution:	Contributing
Feature:	Gatepost between the Flower Garden and Front Field
Feature Identification Number:	166691
Type of Feature Contribution:	Contributing
Feature:	Urn Planters
Feature Identification Number:	166693
Type of Feature Contribution:	Contributing
Feature:	Fence Remnant at Turkey Pen
Feature Identification Number:	166695
Type of Feature Contribution:	Contributing
Feature:	Fence Remnant near Servant's Barn
Feature Identification Number:	166697
Type of Feature Contribution:	Contributing
Feature:	Fence Remnant South of the Flower Garden
Feature Identification Number:	166701
Type of Feature Contribution:	Contributing
Feature:	Fence Remnant South of the Orchard
Feature Identification Number:	166703
Type of Feature Contribution:	Contributing
Feature:	Drainage Structures
Feature Identification Number:	166705
Type of Feature Contribution:	Undetermined
Feature:	Wooden Bollards
Feature Identification Number:	166707
Type of Feature Contribution:	Non contributing – compatible
Feature:	HVAC systems
Feature Identification Number:	166709

Type of Feature Contribution:	Non contributing – compatible
Feature:	Picnic tables
Feature Identification Number:	166711
Type of Feature Contribution:	Non contributing – compatible
Feature:	Benches
Feature Identification Number:	166713
Type of Feature Contribution:	Non contributing – compatible
Feature:	Trash Cans
Feature Identification Number:	166715
Type of Feature Contribution:	Non contributing – compatible
Feature:	Bike Rack
Feature Identification Number:	166717
Type of Feature Contribution:	Non contributing – compatible
Feature:	Ring Buoy Hangers
Feature Identification Number:	166719
Type of Feature Contribution:	Non contributing – compatible
Feature:	Chain Link Fence around Collection Storage Building
Feature Identification Number:	166721
Type of Feature Contribution:	Non contributing – compatible
Feature:	Maintenance Area Fence
Feature Identification Number:	166723
Type of Feature Contribution:	Non contributing – compatible
Feature:	Chain Link fence at northern property line
Feature Identification Number:	166725
Type of Feature Contribution:	Non contributing – compatible
Feature:	Metal Pipe at Railroad Crossing
Feature Identification Number:	166727
Type of Feature Contribution:	Non contributing – compatible

Feature: Drain culverts under entrance drive and drive across front lawn

Feature Identification Number: 166729

Type of Feature Contribution: Non contributing – compatible

Feature: Wooden Gate at Maintenance Yard Fence

Feature Identification Number: 166731

Type of Feature Contribution: Non contributing – compatible

Feature: Gate Between Front Field and Front Lawn

Feature Identification Number: 166733

Type of Feature Contribution: Non contributing – compatible

**Landscape Characteristic Graphics:**



*Melrose Orchard gate*





*Melrose ornamental walking gate*



*Melrose flower parterre urns*





*Melrose tennis posts*





*Fence remnant*

### **Natural Systems and Features**

The natural systems and features contributing to the physical form of the historic landscape include hydrology, soils, and climate. Spanish Bayou historically marked the eastern boundary of the Melrose estate; and though it has shifted somewhat since the periods of significance, it remains the eastern boundary. Currently, modern debris washed downstream from adjacent neighborhoods litters the Bayou. A sewer line crossing the Bayou creates a dam obstructing the free flow of water. Similarly, the invert elevation of the culvert under the railroad is significantly higher than the streambed, thereby requiring an elevated water level to maintain the movement of water downstream. Despite these deficiencies, Spanish Bayou retains integrity. The site features three series of soil: Memphis silt loam (the dominant series that occupies upland areas with slopes from 2 to 17%), Gullied land Natchez complex (found along the Spanish Bayou in areas with slopes between 17-60%), and Falaya silt loam (in a small area south of the Orchard). The soils are all Loess soils, the characteristic fine-grained soil found in this region of

Mississippi. It is highly erodible, resulting in distinct, steeply cut banks, as seen in areas around the Bayou. The soils and the unique geology of the region that created them, remain virtually unchanged from both periods of significance. The hot and humid climate influenced the architecture of Melrose. The Main House, for example, occupies the highest point on the property in order to take advantage of prevailing breezes and the Stables are located downwind from the Main House. The deep double porches on the Main House, Kitchen, and Dairy provide shady respite from the heat of the sun.

**Character-defining Features:**

Feature:	Spanish Bayou
Feature Identification Number:	164801
Type of Feature Contribution:	Contributing
Feature:	Loess Soils
Feature Identification Number:	164869
Type of Feature Contribution:	Contributing
Feature:	Climate
Feature Identification Number:	164871
Type of Feature Contribution:	Contributing

**Spatial Organization**

**MCMURRAN PERIOD**

The McMurrans constructed the majority of the buildings at Melrose c. 1847. The Melrose Main House occupies the highest point on the property to take advantage of prevailing breezes. The placement of the house on high ground is similar to other plantation houses built in the Natchez area during the antebellum period. The Main House is oriented west-northwest and east-southeast. A pair of two-story brick dependencies, the Kitchen and Dairy, flank each other across a rear Courtyard. The volume of the Courtyard is the same volume as the Main House repeated as a void instead of a solid.

The McMurrans era buildings also included two clapboard Slave Cabins, a clapboard Carriage House, and clapboard Stable arranged around a Stable Yard located on level ground northeast of the Main House. The buildings are visible from the Main House but arranged so as not to be focal points. The arrangement of these buildings is less formal than the geometry of the Main House and its dependencies.

The McMurrans organized the estate into two zones with distinct spatial characteristics. The inner zone was predominately residential and featured formal spatial organization. The outer zone, surrounding the inner zone, was more agricultural in character with an informal spatial organization that responded freely to the natural topography of the site.

The McMurran inner zone contained the Main House, Kitchen, Dairy, Cisterns, and Main House Privy. As the Cultural Landscape Report carefully reconstructs, Euclidean geometry based on the dimensions of the house provide the organizational structure for the inner zone. The Main House, omitting the back porch, fits into a circle with a 47.5-foot radius. This dimension appeared again in the landscape, as a circle with a radius of 475 feet passed through several significant landscape features that mark the boundary between the inner and outer zones. The landscape features on this circle included: the gate on the entrance drive separating the Front Field and Front Lawn; the fence dividing the Front Field from the Front Lawn; the gate from the Front Field into the Flower Garden; the end of the cherry laurel hedge between the Flower Garden and Orchard; the Slave Cabins, Stable Yard, and Carriage House; and the far corners of the Vegetable Garden. The radius apparently was used to locate these points at the limits of the inner zone, but the circumference of the circle was not given clear expression on the ground. Only the arc of the fence separating the front lawn from the field beyond approximately followed this line. One concludes that the circle had been an ordering device on some paper plan and had not been intended to be visible in the landscape (CLR 1996: 90).

The outer zone, on the other hand, was historically agricultural and had a more informal character. The edges of the woods, which defined the open spaces, responded to the topography. The woods historically occupied the steeper slopes; fields occupied the relatively level ground.

These inner and outer zones had their own internal spatial organization that created discrete landscape areas with their own distinct character. The landscape surrounding the house included both ornamental grounds and domestic workspaces. The ornamental grounds included the Front Lawn, Flower Garden, and Orchard. The domestic workspaces included the Courtyard, Back Yard, Stable Yard, and Vegetable Garden. The Front Lawn historically functioned as an aesthetic component of the picturesque landscape by providing a carpet of lawn across which to view the house. Two clusters of pine trees at the outer edge of the Front Lawn framed the view towards the house. Similarly, the Front Lawn and pine trees drew an observer's eyes from the house out towards the far edge of the Front Field. The Flower Garden and Orchard, installed for the McMurrans' personal enjoyment, occupied the space south of the house. The cherry laurel hedge that divided the Orchard and Flower Garden aligned with the rear wall of the Main House.

The McMurrans Courtyard consisted of the open space between the Main House and the outbuildings extending southeast, including the Kitchen, Dairy, Smokehouse and Main House Privy. The volume of the Courtyard, formed by the facades of the Main House, Kitchen, and Dairy, were exactly the same dimensions of the Main House. The Back Yard extended southeast from the Courtyard, to a fence marking the boundary between the inner and outer zones, and north, to the edge of the Stable Yard and Vegetable Garden. The Stable Yard and Vegetable Garden occupied the northern edge of the inner zone, and like the Courtyard, were more associated with domestic work than with recreation. During the McMurran period, the Stable Yard was an open space enclosed by several buildings, including a Stable, Carriage

House, two Slave Cabins, and a Slave Privy.

#### DAVIS-KELLY PERIOD

Little is known about the spatial organization during this period. It is likely that the organization and hierarchy of the estate established by the McMurran family continued during this time.

#### KELLY PERIOD

The Kellys maintained the spatial organization of the nineteenth century landscape, altering it slightly to suit their needs and tastes. According to the Cultural Landscape Report, George and Ethel Kelly relied upon the memories of former slaves and caretakers of the property, Jane Johnson and Alice Sims, for direction in the preservation of the grounds. The Kellys used these women's descriptions of the original layout of the property to guide their rehabilitation of the grounds. They replanted the ornamental landscape of the inner zone, including the cherry laurel hedges, keeping the spatial layout of the McMurran period. The Kellys operated a small dairy farm and rented out fields to local farmers, so the spatial organization of the outer zone also remained similar as to the McMurran period. The Kellys added several farming related buildings to the Stable Yard. Most of the buildings occupied a place along the fence line keeping the interior of the yard open. Only one of these buildings exists at Melrose today.

#### CALLON PERIOD

The Callons retained the location and arrangement of the original buildings but removed the farm buildings added by the Kellys except for a small storage shed next to the Stable. The Callons also removed all fencing on the property. They discontinued farming so the spatial organization of the property eroded as fence lines disappeared and woodland edges moved. Gone was any distinction between the inner and outer zones. The internal spatial organization of the inner zone also evaporated as the Callons removed hedges, resulting in an open landscape where one space flowed uninterrupted into the next.

#### NPS PERIOD/EXISTING CONDITIONS

The current landscape under the administration of the NPS has seven discernable spatial areas. These include the large Front Field, the manicured landscape area around the Main House and outbuildings (including those in the Stable Yard), the Large Pond, the open fields along the gravel road to the maintenance area, the area of woods parallel to Melrose-Montebello Parkway, and the woods along Spanish Bayou.

The NPS constructed a complex of maintenance buildings at the southwest corner of the property, near the intersection of the railroad and the Melrose-Montebello Parkway. These buildings are arranged around the perimeter of a parking lot and storage yard. The NPS added two parking spaces for RVs near the center of this space.

The NPS restored the allée of cherry laurel leading to the Vegetable Garden (now parking area) as well as the cherry laurel hedges that historically defined the orchard, which helps delineate the inner zone spaces from the McMurran and the Kelly periods. The NPS also

restored the hedges along the entrance drive between the Main House and the Front Lawn making the boundaries of that area legible once again. These restorations help to define the extent of the 475-foot circle that loosely defined the boundary of the inner and outer zones of the property during both the McMurren and Kelly periods. The lack of fences associated with the inner and outer zones of the property remains a deficiency, making the spatial organization of these distinct areas difficult to read in the landscape.

**Character-defining Features:**

Feature:	Front Lawn
Feature Identification Number:	164873
Type of Feature Contribution:	Contributing
Feature:	Flower Garden
Feature Identification Number:	164875
Type of Feature Contribution:	Contributing
Feature:	Orchard
Feature Identification Number:	164877
Type of Feature Contribution:	Contributing
Feature:	Back yard
Feature Identification Number:	164879
Type of Feature Contribution:	Contributing
Feature:	Stable yard
Feature Identification Number:	164881
Type of Feature Contribution:	Contributing
Feature:	North Side
Feature Identification Number:	164883
Type of Feature Contribution:	Contributing
Feature:	Front Field
Feature Identification Number:	164885
Type of Feature Contribution:	Contributing
Feature:	Inner Zone
Feature Identification Number:	164887

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Outer Zone

Feature Identification Number: 164889

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Maintenance Area and Storage Yard

Feature Identification Number: 164891

Type of Feature Contribution: Non contributing – compatible

### **Views and Vistas**

One of the most significant components of the McMurran landscape was the carefully constructed views across the property. Panoramic photographs from the early twentieth century document the appearance of the Melrose grounds fifty years after their installation. The historic view from the Main House, across the Front Lawn and Front Field, is reminiscent of the English picturesque landscape tradition. There were similar long views towards the house during both the McMurran and Kelly periods, most notable being the view of the Main House from the entrance gate. The location of the parterre in the Flower Garden provided long views to the south across a field during both periods. The longest views were available from the rear gallery of the Main House, where an observer had an unobstructed view across the Orchard towards the far southwest corner of the property.

The Kellys allowed trees to grow south of the cypress pond, blocking the view of the house from the entrance gate. The Kellys also interrupted the main view out from the front of the Main House by planting a hedge of shrubs along the fence separating the Front Lawn from the Front Field late in their occupation of the site. Trees began to grow along the fences dividing the fields on the south side of the property, blocking views in that direction from the house.

Many of the historically significant views seen in the early twentieth century panoramic photographs disappeared by the time the Callons purchased the property in 1976. Trees and shrubs growing along the old fence lines matured, obscuring views between the inner and outer zones. The Callons installed a new loop road around the Front Lawn that provided visitors a new view to the front of the house. The NPS has added trees in the Front Field and along the north property boundary, which when mature, will help screen the adjacent neighborhood from view.

While changes in the landscape diminish the historic views and vistas, several historically significant views remain in the current landscape. The view towards the Main House across the Front Field, which originally occurred at the historic entrance, shifted south with the construction of Melrose-Montebello Parkway. The view towards the Front Field from the front steps of the Main House is largely consistent with its historic appearance. A vegetated berm screens views of the Melrose-Montebello Parkway allowing views to extend to the far tree line that is in the approximate location of the historic tree line (Graphic 11). An oblique view of the



Main House exists along the Entrance Drive, just inside the location of the gate that historically separated the Front Lawn from the Front Field. Currently this view is only available to pedestrians. Historically, visitors experienced this view from a vehicle or carriage. The growth of trees along the south and eastern edges of the inner zone of Melrose shortens the views from the rear of the Main House, which historically would have extended across fields to the far property line. The view from the Courtyard is significant because it visually links the Main House area to the Stable Yard area. Woodlands also block the full extent of the view of the Orchard. Historically the view extended towards the south corner of the property, providing what was the longest view from the house.

**Character-defining Features:**

Feature:	View toward the Main House
Feature Identification Number:	164999
Type of Feature Contribution:	Contributing
Feature:	View from the front steps of the Main Ho
Feature Identification Number:	165001
Type of Feature Contribution:	Contributing
Feature:	Oblique view of the main house
Feature Identification Number:	165003
Type of Feature Contribution:	Contributing
Feature:	View from the courtyard
Feature Identification Number:	165007
Type of Feature Contribution:	Contributing

**Buildings and Structures**

**MCMURRAN PERIOD**

According to the Melrose Cultural Landscape Report, the first mention of construction activity at Melrose occurs in a letter dated January 14, 1843; however, because of receipts showing John McMurran purchased a large amount of lumber in 1847, the construction date of the Main House is thought to be this year. The McMurrans probably built the various outbuildings at Melrose to provide amenities for the builders and slaves present on the property during construction before building the mansion itself. In September 1847, a family letter describes the house as almost done. By 1848, the family moved to Melrose and took up residence.

The original antebellum complex included the following structures, all of which remain in the landscape, retain historic integrity, and are in good condition:

Main House (Graphic 74):

The McMurrans family constructed the Main House c. 1847. Its principal elevation is oriented west-northwest. The Main House is two stories tall with a raised basement and an attic. The building is brick, laid in common bond with narrow joints. The principal façade is five bays wide with a two-story portico across the three central bays. The rear elevation has a full-length two-story portico with massive, square piers. The building is in good condition and retains a high degree of integrity for both periods of significance.

Melrose Kitchen (Graphic 75):

The McMurrans constructed the Kitchen outbuilding at approximately the same time as the Main House, circa 1847. It is a two-story rectangular building with a gable roof. The principal elevation, facing south, has a two-story portico. The south wall, the principal elevation, aligns with the north wall of the Main House. The first floor of the building was the historic location of the Kitchen. The upper, second story was probably used as living quarters for slaves originally. The NPS currently has a visitor center, bookstore, and office in the building, which remains in good condition.

Melrose Dairy (Graphic 76):

Built at the same approximate time as the Main House, the Melrose Dairy is in most ways a mirror image of the Melrose Kitchen. It is a two-story building with a gable roof on the west end and a parapet wall on the east elevation. The McMurrans used the downstairs as a dairy and laundry facility. The upstairs was likely living quarters for domestic slaves during the McMurrans period. Alice Sims reportedly lived in the upstairs rooms of this building during the Kelly period. The Kellys installed a garage in the building sometime around 1908, which the Callons removed in the late 1970s. The NPS removed early twentieth century garage doors on the west elevation and replaced them with a single window opening.

Melrose Main House Privy (Graphic 77):

The Privy is east of the Dairy Cistern House. It is a square brick building with pyramidal roof covered in wood shakes. The brick is common bond. There are two doors on the east elevation, one of which opens into a historic privy and the other into a modern restroom. The two historic toolshed rooms located in the northwest and northeast corners of the building are now modern restrooms. A door on the south elevation opens into another historic privy. The Kellys and the Callons converted portions of this building into a modern bathroom with modern plumbing. The NPS installed a brick walkway along the east elevation to provide ADA access to a restroom.

Melrose Smokehouse (Graphic 78):

The Smokehouse is located east of the Kitchen Cistern House. It is a square, brick building, with pyramidal roof. The brick is common bond with a header course every sixth row. It has a single door on its south elevation and a single window on north elevation with original paint treatment on the interior. The exterior is very similar in appearance to the Main House Privy, located on the other side of the Courtyard. The McMurrans used the building as a smokehouse. The Kellys inserted a pump into the building to pump water into the Main House. The Callons used the building to house HVAC equipment.

Melrose Kitchen Cistern House (Graphic 79):

One of two mirror image structures used for storing water, the Kitchen Cistern is between the Kitchen and the Smoke House. It is an octagonal structure made from wooden lattice. Historically, gutters on the Kitchen building connected to the cistern, supplying it with water.

Melrose Dairy Cistern House (Graphic 80):

This is a mirror image of another cistern house opposite the Courtyard. Both cisterns have the same dimensions and architectural features. The Dairy Cistern House is between the Dairy and the Privy. Inside the cistern is an iron pump set into an iron well cap. A herringbone apron surrounds the cistern. The Dairy gutter system connected to the cistern historically, supplying rainwater for storage.

Melrose North Slave Cabin (Graphic 81):

The McMurrans constructed this wooden frame building during the antebellum period as living quarters for slaves. The building is a simple rectangular structure with a high-pitched gable roof. It has a brick pier foundation. The main façade on the west has two doors. The NPS currently uses the structure for interpretation.

Melrose South Slave Cabin (Graphic 82):

The McMurrans constructed the South Slave Cabin as living quarters for slaves. It is a rectangular structure with a steeply pitched gable roof. Its main façade on the west has three doors and three windows. Jane Johnson lived in this cabin according to family tradition. The NPS uses the building for park offices.

Melrose Carriage House (Graphic 83):

The Carriage House is a two-story rectangular structure historically used to store carriages, wagons, and other equipment. The McMurrans constructed the building during the antebellum period. The north elevation is more ornate than the other elevations. The Kellys added a shed addition to the east side of the building sometime in the first half of the twentieth century, which remains today.

Melrose Stable (Graphic 84):

The McMurrans constructed the Stable during the antebellum period. It is a one-and-a-half-story rectangular building with gable roof and clapboard siding. There are two doors on both the south and east facades. The Kellys added windows to the west and north elevations in the 1920s. It has a concrete foundation and a wood shake roof.

Melrose Main House Cistern (Graphic 85):

A Cistern stands in the yard north of the Main House. It was an underground reservoir used to store rainwater collected from the roof of the Main House. A brick apron surrounds the cistern. It has an iron cap and pump for drawing water.

Melrose Stable Cistern (Graphic 86):

A cistern and watering trough for livestock are near the Melrose Stable. These are similar in appearance to the other cistern structures used to store rainwater underground.

Cistern at North Slave Cabin (Graphic 87):

A cast iron pump on concrete wall with iron cap wellhead exists near the north slave cabin.

Melrose Slave Privy (Graphic 88):

The Slave Privy is east of the South Slave Cabin. It is believed to date from the McMurran period, likely after 1850. It is a square structure with wood clapboard walls set on a brick foundation. The majority of the existing material is not original but the result of twentieth century renovations. The slave privy is the only known surviving building of its type in Mississippi. (HRS 1996: p.77)

DAVIS-KELLY PERIOD:

Although very little is known about the goings on at Melrose between 1865 and 1901, it is certain that Julia Davis Kelly built the Playhouse at Melrose in the 1870s or early 1880s for her son George Malin Davis Kelly.

Melrose Playhouse (Graphic 89):

The Playhouse dates to c. 1880, constructed for George Malin Davis Kelly. It was originally in the back yard north of the Kitchen. The Callons moved it south of the Dairy. The NPS returned it the north side of the Kitchen in its approximate historic location, where it remains in good condition.

KELLY PERIOD

The Kelly family made Melrose their permanent residence around 1910. They made minor alterations to the antebellum buildings and added a few new buildings to support their use of the property. They converted the ground floor of the Dairy into an automobile garage, installing a garage door and a gasoline pump. They constructed dog pens adjacent to the Stable Yard and converted the Stable into a cow barn. They added a lean-to addition onto the side of the Carriage House. They constructed a chicken house, wood shed, storage shed, and cattle shed in along the inside of the fence enclosing the Stable Yard. They also added a feeding shed just outside the Stable Yard. All of these new buildings were frame structures with shed roofs and wood siding. The Kellys built a turkey pen on the east side of the back yard that included a small turkey house.

Flower Garden Parterre (Graphic 90):

According to Kelly family tradition, a brick parterre garden feature already existed when the Kellys took up residence at Melrose in 1910, though in a ruined state. The exact date of construction for the original feature is unknown and it is interesting to note that the feature does not appear on the 1908 Babbit survey. The Kellys rebuilt the parterre based on the remembrances of Jane Johnson and Alice Sims in the early twentieth century. Ethel Kelly

rebuilt the brick parterre a second time in the 1940s as a surprise gift for her husband. The Callons rebuilt the parterre a third time in the 1970s-1980s. Today the parterre features a pair of curved brick walls extending from the centralized set of stairs. The curved brick walls consist of stacked bond brick courses with a brick cap coursed in running bond. During the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century an observer looking south from the central stairs had a long view to the far corner of an open field bounded by woods. This view no longer remains. The structure is in good condition. Not enough is known about the nature of the “reconstruction” of the feature by the Callons in the 1970s, to determine whether the parterre is a contributing resource. It is not clear how much of the 1940s parterre remained when the Callons began rebuilding or if the Callons used any of the original material in the reconstruction. While the feature retains integrity of location and setting, it appears that the workmanship, materials, feeling, and association are reflective of the Callon period rather than the Kelly period. If the 1940s reconstruction by the Kellys remained intact, it would be considered a contributing resource today.

Servant’s Barn (Graphic 91):

Also known as the ‘Servant’s Barn’, the employees of the Kelly family used this nineteenth century building for storage of their own animals. Kelly servants also had use of a fenced field between this building and the historic Stable Yard. This building and the fenced field are strongly associated with Alice Sims and Jane Johnson, as both of these women kept their livestock here. Family members referred to this area as, “Aunt Alice’s Barnyard” (CLR 1996: 119). The barn is a frame structure with board and batten siding. The siding is of multiple colors, suggesting the material is recycled. It has a front gable roof with standing seam metal roof. A metal chimney protrudes from the roof. There is a shed roof addition on the south side and a shed addition on the rear/east side. These additions are simple wood post on concrete floors. The building’s date of construction is unknown, but believed to be nineteenth century. The building retains integrity, though the extents of the fenced field are imperceptible in the landscape. The building is in fair condition.

Turkey Pen and House (Graphic 92):

The Kellys raised a variety of fowl at Melrose, including turkeys, ducks, geese, and guinea hen. They constructed a large turkey pen in the general location of another pen that appears on the Babbit 1908 survey. Today remnants of fence material survive nailed on trees along the perimeter of the former pen. A deteriorated wooden shelter stands in the center of the pen that has vertical wood boards nailed to an internal wood frame. It has a corrugated metal shed roof. Chicken wire stretches across a portion of the front of the structure. The structure is in poor condition.

Storage Shed behind Stable (Graphic 93):

The Kellys constructed this shed as part of their expansion of agriculture-related buildings on the property. The building has a shed roof and board and batten siding. It has a single door and three glazed fixed-windows on the front façade. The shed is one of the few Kelly period farm buildings that the Callon family did not remove. It is in good condition.

#### CALLON PERIOD

The physical condition of the buildings declined after the 1950s. In 1977, soon after they purchased the property, the Callons granted a historic preservation easement to the Mississippi Department of Archives and History assuring that the buildings would not be substantially changed or no building added that would detract from the historic integrity of the site. This easement applied to 40 acres centered on the house. The Callons extensively renovated the buildings and kept all but the children's Playhouse in their original location. The Playhouse moved from north of the Kitchen to south of the Dairy, near the Orchard. The Callons removed all the Kelly-era farm buildings except for the small storage shed behind the Stable. They added a greenhouse in the field east of the orchard and two pump houses, one in the woods south of the Orchard, and another in the woods north of the large pond.

##### Pump House #1 (Graphic 94):

The Callons constructed the Pump House circa 1980s. This wooden frame structure houses a well and pump. The roof is metal and the front façade features a single door. It is in poor condition.

##### Pump House #2(Graphic 95):

Set into the woods north of the Large Pond, Pump House #2 is identical to Pump House #1. This pump house is also in poor condition.

#### NPS PERIOD/EXISTING CONDITIONS

The NPS added several buildings to facilitate maintenance and use of the site. Located in the outer agricultural fields, away from high visitation areas and out of view, these non-contributing buildings are in good condition.

##### Collection Storage Building (Graphic 96):

The NPS constructed the Collection Storage Building, also known as the Bally Building, south of the Servants' Barn along the Callon road leading to the southwest corner of the property.

##### Maintenance Shop (Graphic 97):

The NPS constructed in the late 1990s this building as part of a new maintenance complex. The Maintenance Shop has several offices and meeting spaces. A Carpenters Shop attaches to the north side of the building.

##### Maintenance Garage (Graphic 98):

The NPS constructed this metal structure as a garage in the late 1990s. Its southern section features four large garage bays. The northern half is mostly open.

##### Maintenance Storage Barn (Graphic 99):

The NPS constructed the open metal barn in the early 2000s in the clearing south of the Maintenance complex.

#### **Character-defining Features:**



Feature: Melrose Main House  
Feature Identification Number: 166573  
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing  
IDLCS Number: 90310

Feature: Melrose Kitchen  
Feature Identification Number: 166575  
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing  
IDLCS Number: 90312

Feature: Melrose Dairy  
Feature Identification Number: 166577  
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing  
IDLCS Number: 90311

Feature: Melrose Main House Privy  
Feature Identification Number: 166579  
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing  
IDLCS Number: 90613

Feature: Melrose Smokehouse  
Feature Identification Number: 166581  
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing  
IDLCS Number: 90612

Feature: Melrose Kitchen Cistern House  
Feature Identification Number: 166583  
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing  
IDLCS Number: 90610

Feature: Melrose Dairy Cistern House  
Feature Identification Number: 166585  
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing  
IDLCS Number: 90611

Melrose Estate  
Natchez National Historical Park

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Feature:	Melrose North Slave Cabin
Feature Identification Number:	166587
Type of Feature Contribution:	Contributing
IDLCS Number:	90616
Feature:	Servant's Barn
Feature Identification Number:	166607
Type of Feature Contribution:	Contributing
Feature:	Turkey Pen
Feature Identification Number:	166609
Type of Feature Contribution:	Contributing
Feature:	Storage Shed behind stable
Feature Identification Number:	166611
Type of Feature Contribution:	Contributing
Feature:	Pump House #1
Feature Identification Number:	166613
Type of Feature Contribution:	Non contributing – compatible
Feature:	Pump House #2
Feature Identification Number:	166615
Type of Feature Contribution:	Non contributing – compatible
Feature:	Collection Storage Building
Feature Identification Number:	166617
Type of Feature Contribution:	Non contributing – compatible
Feature:	Maintenance Shop
Feature Identification Number:	166619
Type of Feature Contribution:	Non contributing – compatible
Feature:	Maintenance Garage
Feature Identification Number:	166621
Type of Feature Contribution:	Non contributing – compatible

Feature: Maintenance Storage Barn  
Feature Identification Number: 166623  
Type of Feature Contribution: Non contributing – compatible

Feature: Melrose South Slave Cabin  
Feature Identification Number: 166647  
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing  
IDLCS Number: 90617

Feature: Melrose Carriage House  
Feature Identification Number: 166649  
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing  
IDLCS Number: 90615

Feature: Melrose Stable  
Feature Identification Number: 166651  
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing  
IDLCS Number: 90619

Feature: Melrose Main House Cistern  
Feature Identification Number: 166653  
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Melrose Stable Cistern  
Feature Identification Number: 166655  
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Cistern at North Slave Cabin  
Feature Identification Number: 166657  
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Melrose Slave Privy  
Feature Identification Number: 166659  
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Melrose Playhouse

Melrose Estate  
Natchez National Historical Park

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Feature Identification Number: 166661

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Flower Garden Parterre

Feature Identification Number: 166663

Type of Feature Contribution: Undetermined

**Landscape Characteristic Graphics:**



*Melrose Dairy*

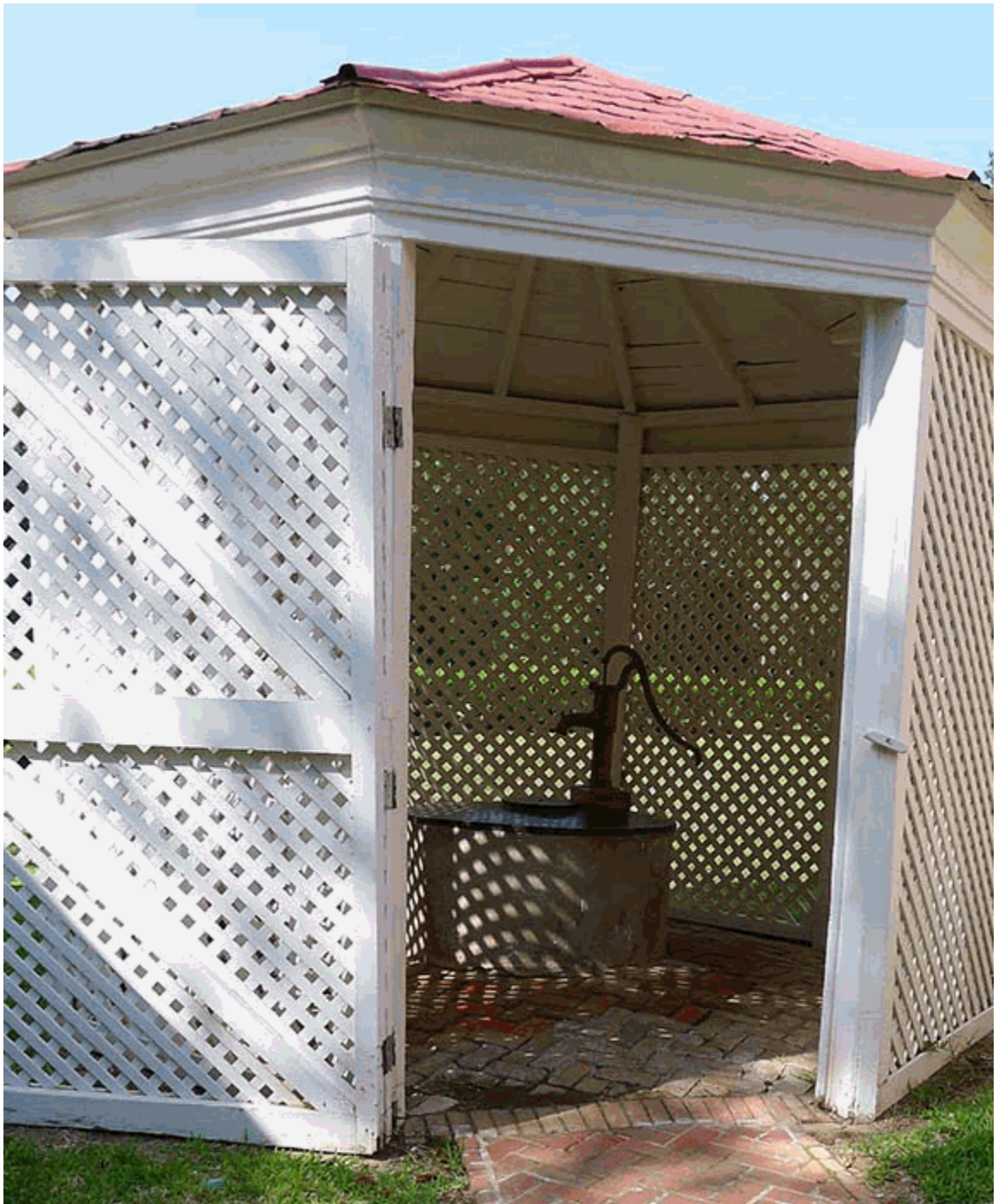


*Melrose Main House Privy*





*Melrose Kitchen Cistern House*



*Melrose Dairy Cistern House*





*Melrose North Slave Cabin*



*Melrose South Slave Cabin*





*Melrose Smokehouse*







*Melrose Main House*

## Condition

### Condition Assessment and Impacts

**Condition Assessment:** Good

**Assessment Date:** 01/31/2003

**Condition Assessment Explanatory Narrative:**

Please note, this condition data is entered in CLAIMS at Level 0 based on the 1996 CLR (Ann Beha Assoc.). This condition data is entered for GPRA purposes as instructed by National PMDS Goal Coordinator.

**Condition Assessment:** Fair

**Assessment Date:** 05/30/2013

**Condition Assessment Explanatory Narrative:**

The overall condition for Melrose is fair. Since completion of the CLR in 1996, the Park has taken action and proceeded with implementation of many of the treatment recommendations put forth the CLR, resulting in increased integrity of the cultural landscape. However, additional work and corrective action is needed to prevent harm to the cultural and natural values of Melrose. In the section that follows, the CLI prescribes specific corrective actions that should be undertaken in the near future. The CLI also recommends continued implementation of the CLR treatment recommendations and the Orchard Rehabilitation Plan (in progress), which will continue to improve the site's historic integrity in the coming years.

## Impacts

**Type of Impact:** Planting Practices

**External or Internal:** Internal

**Impact Description:** Two of three camellia plantings dating to c.1905 in the Front Lawn of Melrose remain in the landscape. Both plants are in decline. The CLR recommends that the NPS take cuttings from the surviving plant and propagate them in order to replace the shrubs with the original type. Once the cuttings are mature, the NPS should consider replacing all three shrubs with the newly grown plants at the same time in order to preserve historic appearance, size, and character of the Front Lawn.

**Type of Impact:** Planting Practices

**External or Internal:** Internal

**Impact Description:** Two clusters of mature pine trees appear in panoramic photograph NATC #164. These trees, which frame the view



from the house towards the Front Field, were an important part of the picturesque landscape entry sequence established during the McMurran period and preserved by the Kellys. The two groups of pines frame the views in and out of the Front Lawn and the CLR considers them among the most important trees at Melrose. The NPS recently replanted the southern group of trees, while the northern group of pines consists of mature trees nearing the end of their lifespan. These mature pines are not the original pines that appear in c.1905 panoramic photographs of Melrose. The discrepancy in the age of the two groups of pine trees results in a different character today than during the historic periods, when both the north and south clusters were the same approximate age and size. It is important that both groups of trees be of the same relative age and size in order to accurately frame the views of the Main House and reflect the original design intent of the picturesque approach to the estate. The age difference between the current trees diminishes the integrity of the landscape. The NPS should consider removal and replacement in kind of the northern, mature group of pine trees in the Front Lawn. The replacement trees should be the same species and approximate size as the recently planted southern group. After replanting, the NPS should allow the two newly planted groups of pine trees to reach maturity together.

**Type of Impact:**

Pruning Practices

**External or Internal:**

Internal

**Impact Description:**

Several of the restored cherry laurel hedges that help to define the historic spatial organization of the site are pruned to a shorter height than they were historically. The NPS should maintain the hedge defining the Orchard at a height equal to the roofline of the Main House Privy, as documented in historic panoramas NATC #182 and NATC #183 and recommended by the CLR. Early 1900s photographs of the property show the cherry laurel hedge associated with the Vegetable Garden maintained in a taller and less uniform condition than what exists today. Park staff should allow this section of hedge to grow to a height of six feet and clip it less frequently. The cherry laurel allée from the Courtyard to the historic Vegetable Garden (now parking area) should be maintained in a manner in keeping with the condition observed in the c.1910 photograph of Jane Johnson (Graphic 21). The NPS should allow the cherry laurel in this area to grow into small trees with distinct trunks instead of shearing the vegetation into a hedge. The CLR recommends maintaining the allée at a height of six feet. The cherry laurel hedge in the Courtyard, near the privy

should be managed in the same way as the cherry laurel allée leading to the historic Vegetable Garden, so as not to inhibit visitor access to the restrooms located in the Main house Privy (CLR 1996: 176-177). Today, Park staff keeps this hedge at a height far shorter than it was kept historically. The cherry laurel hedges along the entrance drive should remain at their current height and level of maintenance, as these hedges were historically shorter and more manicured than the other hedges on the property. Pruning by mechanical means is not recommended for any of the cherry laurel hedges. All hedges should be pruned by hand to produce a looser and softer texture, avoid sheering leaves, and to more accurately reflect the historic appearance.

**Type of Impact:**

Inappropriate Maintenance

**External or Internal:**

Internal

**Impact Description:**

The mowing regime should be relaxed to allow the grass to reach two to three inches in height in the Front Lawn and Courtyard. Over time, this will encourage a more diverse composition of lawn more reflective of the turn of the century condition (CLR 1996:167). In the Flower Garden, a special mowing regime should be developed to restore the Kelly Period garden paths as recommended by the CLR. NPS should not maintain the same standard of appearance in the outer yards as they do in the ornamental grounds. The back and outer yards and fields should not be mown as regularly, instead they should be mown seasonally, up to four times per year. A certain amount of visible wear and tear in these areas would be appropriate, with worn paths and visible gateways acceptable (CLR1996: 176). The Orchard Rehabilitation Plan will provide specific recommendations related to the treatment of the lawn areas within the Orchard.

**Type of Impact:**

Neglect

**External or Internal:**

Internal

**Impact Description:**

The Melrose Turkey House (LCS # 091787), a deteriorated wooden poultry coop, stands in the location of the turkey pen near the Servant's Barn at Melrose. This structure is in poor condition. Without stabilization or repair, it will continue to degrade. The NPS should take action to preserve and/or rehabilitate this resource dating from the Kelly Period. The Orchard Rehabilitation Plan recommends the use of chickens in the Orchard, and the proximity of this structure to the Orchard

makes it an excellent candidate for rehabilitation in support of that proposed land use.

**Type of Impact:** Adjacent Lands

**External or Internal:** External

**Impact Description:** The current western boundary of Melrose consists of Melrose-Montebello Parkway and its associated right-of-way. This right-of-way land was part of the Melrose estate until Mrs. Kelly sold it to the City of Natchez in 1972 for road construction. The right-of-way on the western side of the parkway is currently undeveloped and comprised of forest. The edge of this forest corresponds to the historic tree line associated with the far edge of the Front Lawn and Front Field of Melrose. The view from the Main House to the western edge of the property remains relatively unchanged from the historic period due to the contribution of these adjacent lands, and the sunken nature of the roadway. The NPS should enter into an agreement with the City of Natchez to protect and preserve this belt of trees located in the right -of-way of Melrose-Montebello Parkway in order to protect this historically important view from development (CLR 1996: 173).

**Type of Impact:** Release To Succession

**External or Internal:** Internal

**Impact Description:** The pattern of fields and woods of the outer zone of the property played an important role in the historic design of Melrose, with the serpentine line of the edge of the woodlands calculated to produce picturesque effects (CLR 1996: 173). The Callons discontinued farming at the estate in the 1970s, releasing many of the outer fields to succession and resulting in a change from agricultural fields to woodland in these areas. Because of changes in property boundaries, it is not possible to restore the historic pattern of fields and woods on the western of southern sides of the estate, but some restoration is possible to the north and east (CLR 1996: 161). The CLR recommends restoring the line of woods defining the south side of the Front Field to its historic curved configuration (CLR 1996: 173). The CLR recommends restoring the historic line of woods south of the large pond (CLR 1996: 173). The NPS have begun this process with the recent planting of trees south of the pond; however, they need to plant additional trees in this location in order to establish woodland. Park Staff have followed a CLR treatment

recommendation related to the southern field of Melrose, clearing a thick belt of woods adjacent to the railroad embankment. Complete restoration of the southern field is not possible however, as the maintenance compound and the road leading to it now occupy the western side of this field, negatively affecting views. The CLR does not recommend any clearing of the woodlands on the Roselawn (north) side of Melrose or south of the Flower Garden (CLR 1996: 174). The extension of woodland on the Roselawn side helps to screen out the adjacent subdivision and the fields located here historically were hidden behind woods in the early twentieth century. The loss of the field south of the Flower Garden is more significant, but cannot be reversed. Melrose-Montebello Parkway occupies a portion of the original field and clearing the forest in this location would be more damaging than helpful to public understanding of the historic character of the area (CLR 1996: 174). The CLR also recommends clearing encroaching woods surrounding the Flower Garden and the Orchard to reflect the historic boundary of each of these areas. Restoring strategic portions of the historic woodland edge as recommended in the CLR would go long way toward increasing historic integrity of the landscape at Melrose.

**Type of Impact:**

Vegetation/Invasive Plants

**External or Internal:**

Internal

**Impact Description:**

Invasive exotic species occur in many areas. There is a patch of Kudzu beside Spanish Bayou, English Ivy is invading the woods west of the Flower Garden, and Japanese honeysuckle and Chinese privet are widespread. According to the CLR, the NPS should eradicate the Kudzu beside Spanish Bayou and remove the English ivy in the woods around the Flower Garden. The CLR acknowledges that the English ivy was probably introduced as a groundcover in the Flower Garden historically, but its historic distribution is unknown. If left unchecked, the ivy will continue to advance into the woods, suppressing native species. Another section of woodland, west of the current visitor parking area/former vegetable garden, is teeming with invasive exotic species. The NPS should consider taking action to suppress invasive species and encourage native species in this area.

## Treatment

## Treatment

**Approved Treatment:** Restoration  
**Approved Treatment Document:** Cultural Landscape Report  
**Document Date:** 02/19/1997

### Approved Treatment Document Explanatory Narrative:

While the recommended treatment for Melrose from the CLR is restoration, the document acknowledges that a complete restoration of the Melrose landscape is not feasible. Instead, the CLR frames its recommendations with due regard for the following considerations:

- The limitations of the historical documentation
- The feasibility of recovering historic characteristics
- The practicality of retaining those characteristics
- The change in use from a private residence to a NPS property
- The requirements and opportunities of landscape preservation (CLR 1996: 156)

The following character defining features are the focus of the CLR's restoration efforts and should be prioritized:

- The spatial organization, so that the components of the suburban villa landscape can be recognized and the arrangement of the buildings and spaces understood
- The entrance drive, so that the picturesque aesthetic manifested in the serpentine approach to the house can be appreciated
- Sufficient details in the layout of the ornamental grounds, orchard, and yards, so that the design of each space can be understood
- Two of the principal views toward the limits of the property, so that something of the spacious character and picturesque composition of the entire landscape can be appreciated (CLR 1996: 156)

The Park has implemented or begun implementation of several projects related to these prioritized restoration efforts, including the following:

- The restoration of the majority of the cherry laurel hedges that define the spatial organization of the inner yard
- The restoration of the principal view of the Main House from the entrance drive and from the Main house across the Front Lawn and Front Field, including the restoration of specimen trees in the Front Lawn
- The in progress Orchard Rehabilitation Plan, which will allow for understanding of the layout and design of the Orchard during the historic period

However, Park staff has not yet accomplished the following priority restoration items identified in the CLR:

- The entrance drive circulation remains as it was during the Callon Period. An attempt at delineating the turnaround loop at the terminus of the entrance drive is not successful, and the non-historic drive

across the Front Lawn added by the Callons remains in the landscape. As a result, visitors to the site are unable to understand this important feature from the picturesque design of the landscape at Melrose.

- While the restoration of the cherry laurel hedges in the inner zone of the property has made the spatial organization of those areas comprehensible, the lack of fences in both the inner and outer zones of the property remain an impediment to visitor understanding of the overall spatial organization of Melrose. The NPS should consider restoring the historic fence lines as outlined in the CLR.
- An important view from the back porch of the Main House across the orchard and fields to the woods by the Spanish Bayou remains unrestored. The CLR recommends opening a gap in the belt of trees south of the Orchard and in the line of trees beside the farm road through the outer fields. The gap should be at least one hundred feet wide at the Orchard fence line. None of the maintenance buildings introduced by the NPS in recent years should be visible, and the vista, though more narrowly framed than the original, would reestablish the historic connection between the Main House and outer fields and woods. In addition, this view would create a sense of living in the country remote from the town, an important component of suburban villa design in Natchez, MS. (CLR 1996: 176)

As of August 2013, an Orchard Management Plan is in draft. Once completed and approved, this document will provide guidance on appropriate plant species for the historic period as well as direction on how to plant, establish, and maintain the Orchard at Melrose.

An Historic Structure Report (2/19/1997) consists of the history, studies, collections, evaluations, assessments, and primary guidelines for the treatment of the historic buildings at Melrose. Undertaken at the same time as the CLR, this document does not discuss the historic landscape in depth, and defers to the CLR on matters of landscape treatment.

### **Approved Treatment Costs**

<b>Cost Date:</b>	02/19/1997
<b>Level of Estimate:</b>	B - Preliminary Plans/HSR-CLR
<b>Cost Estimator:</b>	Contractor

### **Bibliography and Supplemental Information**